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**UNEMPLOYMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON WELL-BEING: A
FIELD STUDY OF SOUTH KOREAN ECONOMIC CRISIS,
1997-2001**

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by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the unemployed in South Korea, who lost their jobs during the economic crisis.

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Based on the in-depth interviews conducted in South Korea, this dissertation examined the reactions to unemployment, experiences of unemployment, and coping strategies and social support of thirty unemployed men who lost their jobs during the economic crisis between 1997 and 2001. While, in general, unemployment is detrimental to individuals' well-being, this study found that the outcome varied by socioeconomic status of the unemployed, which affected levels of social support and coping strategies among the unemployed. A main finding of this study requires us to re-examine consequences of poverty and material hardship. The poverty, in relation to the degree of available resources and social support, affected detrimental outcomes on well-

being among the unemployed. The poor tended to be more often unemployed, less often married, and received less support from their family members and friends. Since individuals living in poverty have a great amount of vulnerability to any type of life event in general, job losses among them tend to destroy already-weakened resources and social networks as well as familial ties. The negative consequences of unemployment, such as family disruption and emotional and physical health problems, caused by material hardship were great among lower-class individuals and families. It was also apparent that middle-class job losers having higher levels of adaptabilities and resources to deal with the negative impacts of job losses, had relatively fewer cases of family disruption and social avoidance, compared to their lower-class counterparts. Not only the social class, but also reasons for unemployment were highly related to outcomes of unemployment on well-being. Those who experienced business failure were more likely to have family disruption, extreme material hardships, homelessness, broken relationships, and lower levels of social support. At the same time layoffs experienced by lower-class individuals were associated with very detrimental health outcomes and behavioral changes. These individuals engaged in high consumption of alcohol and cigarettes, which affects negative health outcomes.

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CHAPTER 1

1-1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of unemployment experience and how persons react to and cope with this situation by exploring the perceptions of individuals who lost their jobs in South Korea during the economic crisis from 1997 to 2001.

The economic crisis of 1997, which greatly affected many Asian countries -- including South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines -- involved severe structural, institutional, and individual disruptions, such as bankruptcies of corporations, financial insolvency, and mass unemployment. In order to reduce loans, most corporations in South Korea laid off workers and reduced payments. Many small companies in the country were closed without paying several months' overdue wages. Workers' strong opposition to layoffs and plant closings was ineffective in this climate of a rapidly falling economy. Labor protection laws and regulations have not been effective in reducing the negative impact of layoffs.¹ These conditions have resulted in desperate material

¹ The trade union associations in Korea also permitted the agreement that corporations might lay off workers in the face of financial difficulties, a practice that had been illegal in Korea since its introduction of the labor law. In January 1998, shortly after his election victory, President Kim announced "the creation of a tripartite agreement between unions, corporations, and the government, one responsible for negotiating pending issues and setting reform." The committee specified 90 items for the social protection of workers, economic restructuring, economic policies, industrial relations and labor laws. They include the structural reform of conglomerates, economic stabilization, legalization of lay-offs, government protection of the unemployed, and improvement of the social safety-net (The International Labor Organization, 1998). Though this is the first social compact among the three parties since the liberation, it is not certain how the government would protect the unemployed with the legalization of lay-offs and with reductions in government spending on public services.

difficulties and family disruption among many Koreans. At the same time, homelessness has become a severe social problem for the first time in Korean history.

Though the economy has recovered unexpectedly fast, a variety of side-effects of the economic crisis -- such as high unemployment, life stress in the face of material deprivation, the feeling of job insecurity-- still remains in many areas of the country. With the devaluation of Korean currency, many people have lost real earnings. Prevailing theories about the East Asian economic development were tarnished by economic downturns that forced other Third World nations to reconsider their adoption of the model suggested by these theories.

Even before the shock of the economic crisis ended, Korea was already restructuring its economy and welfare policies based on neo-liberal structural adjustment, which involved strategies such as the privatization of state-funded companies, the introduction of labor market flexibility, and the slashing of welfare budgets. Some of the policies -- which the government adopted in the face of mass unemployment and a growing incidence of homelessness, after receiving IMF bail-out at the end of 1997 -- are not aimed toward constructing a social safety-net which could support people living in poverty.

Many Korean scholars have studied the recent macroeconomic changes in South Korea, but little attention has been paid to the harmful consequences of the economic crisis on the overall well-being of the unemployed. Since most of the studies have been based on both survey research methods and secondary data analyses, it was very hard to understand individuals' different situations,

interpretations, and experiences, which often affect level of individual well-being in the combination with unemployment. As the first study based on in-depth interviews with the unemployed in South Korea, this research would provide a variety of underlying explanations on lives of the unemployed and fill the unexplained aspects of the quantitative research on the subject. The present study examines the link between economic crisis and individual well-being, and attempts to investigate how individuals perceive themselves and their family lives in the face of sudden unemployment. At the same time, the coping and survival strategies they adopt to deal with the problem, and the underlying mechanism that exists between them and their surroundings from personal to formal relationships, are examined. On the basis of data from a qualitative study of the unemployed in South Korea, this study seeks to contribute to finding distinctive features of individuals' experiences and coping strategies in the face of unemployment embedded in non-Western societies.

1-2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Macroeconomic changes, including rapid economic growth, economic instability, and economic recession, have been examined widely in relation to individual well-being. It is generally recognized that economic crisis is associated inversely with health, especially deleterious effects on mortality and morbidity. While there is rich literature on the association between economic crisis and individual well-being, most studies have focused on the populations of Western

countries rather than of the developing and undeveloped world. This is partly due to the limited availability of reliable data in these countries.

First, there is little evidence that the theoretical models tested in the West can be applied meaningfully to the Third World. The theoretical models developed and accepted in industrialized countries may explain very little in less industrialized countries. For example, Corin (1994) argues that most research on stress illustrates the dangers of an inappropriate transfer of intellectual constructs from one culture to another, explaining that the challenge is to successfully balance useful generalizations with respect for the specificity of a given socio-economic and cultural environment. As such, it is a big problem for researchers to work on developing countries with models developed in the West. With a history of economic development very different from that of Western countries, developing countries have experienced very different economic changes. Also, as Lin and Lai (1995) point out, the validity of a theoretical model must be enhanced through the process of repeated verification in heterogeneous populations, time, and space. Thus, it is crucial to test the validity of theories applied to individuals in the developing world.

Second, while empirical studies focusing on the health effect of economic changes have shown that either economic crisis or economic boom affects a given population's health negatively, but these studies have been criticized for their tendency to ignore intervening in the relationship between economic changes and health. The problem derives from the difficulty of isolating noneconomic stressors affecting ill health. In particular, this problem is too difficult to resolve

when the study is based on only survey data, which provide limited information from closed questions that do not account for individual variations. Most of the social and cultural determinants considered in quantitative studies are measured using a few discrete variables that are treated as if they were properties of individuals rather than of groups (Corin 1994: 97).² On the contrary, a qualitative analysis would make it possible to uncover intervening variables affecting the relationship between health and economic changes and to understand hidden components of social and psychological resources as well as a person's own strategies in response to unexpected life events.

Third, most research on the health effect of economic crisis acknowledges that economic crisis measured by involuntary unemployment reduces personal and social resources that might mediate or buffer stress. Since economic crisis accompanies massive unemployment in a short period of time, it is not surprising that those macro- social changes lead to material deprivation and psychological distress among the unemployed. But while it is clear that the experience of being unemployed increases various stressful life events known to cause physical illness and psychological distress, little is known of the mechanisms or process of health effects of unemployment as evaluated by the impact of social and psychological resources on stressful life events.

² Corin (1994 : 97-98) further addresses the reasons for the pattern. First, large-scale studies face inevitable cost and feasibility constraints. Second, the main aim of epidemiological research is still to document and explain systematic differences in the distribution of health problems, as medically perceived. As a result, there is often a great discrepancy between the detail and care with which generic or physiological hypotheses are formulated and tested, and the loose and crude treatment accorded to social and cultural hypotheses.

Fourth, as with many Asian societies characterized by their strong reliance on blood bonds, school ties, and networks, it has been a long tradition in Korea to regard all individual relationships as blood forming kin relations; thus, all vertical authority relations are considered as father-and-son relationships, while horizontal relationships are thought to resemble brother relationships. At the same time, while rapid economic development in East Asia has reduced traditional extended family connections, strong familial support systems among Koreans still remain important. All these distinctive types of social relationships play a role in obtaining jobs and promotions. Some researchers have reported that the effect of social support on instrumental needs was very weak in rural areas in which everyone has very similar levels of social relationship. This implies that the effects of social support on health in Asian countries would result in very different impacts from what has been observed in Western societies.

Finally, findings of this study would help policy makers consider focus on future welfare policy priorities that target relevant social resources for individuals and families in the developing countries facing economic crisis. Since social resources, particularly in non-Western countries, are distributed more unequally and stratified by socioeconomic status and gender, policies based on enhancing social resources may play a crucial role for most developing countries where economic fluctuations are prevalent.

1-3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central questions and sub questions investigated in this study are as follows;

How do broader contexts of economic instability at the macroeconomic level shape individuals' everyday lives?

How do the unemployed shape the meaning of work?

How do the unemployed feel about the society and the government?

To what degree have their lives changed due to the economic crisis?

How do individuals perceive and react to their unemployment?

How do they feel about themselves, their family members, and their friends?

What happens to the individuals after losing their jobs?

What happens to them, their families, and significant others?

How does the job loss affect individuals' health?

What coping and survival strategies do they adopt and develop to deal with their unemployment?

What emotional and behavioral strategies do they have to deal with negative psychological feelings?

To what degree do the unemployed perceive that they receive emotional and material support from others and/or from society?

How does social support influence the well-being of the unemployed?

1-4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Meaning of Work

Prior to investigating the nature of unemployment and its impact on human well-being, it would be very significant to understand the meanings and functions of work. None of us would agree that work is only a source of income. A large body of previous research has traced the meanings and functions of work as perceived by different types of people, despite encompassing universal agreements.

Work in modern society serves many functions in that it provides outcomes that have the potential to satisfy a number of personal needs. Hayes and Nutman (1981) classify the functions of work as an income source, a form of activity, a structuring of time, a source of creativity and mastery, providing opportunity for social interaction, a source of identity, and giving to a person a sense of purpose. Alternately, one can see that the unemployed lose these kinds of privileges and advantages in their everyday life and that they need to deal with specific negative feelings and life events derived from their unemployment.

Ransome (1995:12) argues that not only does work provide people with a means of gaining access to necessary resources, it also constitutes one of the most important mechanisms through which people interact within the social structure. Nor is this influence restricted to purely extrinsic material outcomes, since it is evident that personal and psychological developments are also profoundly affected by the experience of work.

The meaning of a given word varies from one society to another due to cultural and other contextual differences in developing and adopting the word in various societies. Like other words, the term *unemployment* signifies different things to people living in different environments. In his analysis of white-collar employment for example, Wright Mills draw attention to a number of these intrinsic features of work:

Apart from the technical operations and skills involved, work is a source of income; the amount, level, and security of pay, and what one's income history has been are part of work's meaning. Work is also a means of gaining status, at the place of work and in the general community.... Work also carries various sorts of power, over materials and tools and machines, but, more crucially now, over other people. [Wright Mills 1953: 230]

For these reasons, the most effective way to understand the meaning of unemployment to various people is to investigate contextual backgrounds, which shape the meaning of the word. In terms of official unemployment rates, most Koreans have lived with a very stable labor market. For the last 30 years, the unemployment rates in South Korea had been between two and three percent until the end of 1997. Since then, the government has implemented policies conducive to rapid economic development, forcing the workers to sacrifice much for their companies. The companies greatly benefit from the government's extensive financial and legal support, including some legal restrictions against workers' organized resistance to being exploited by companies during bad employment conditions. Any policy options suggested no priority above the country's modernization and economic growth. Evidently, human rights were not

mentionable until the country achieved a moderate level of economic development.

In the past, relatively lower unemployment rates contributed to the lifetime employment of workers in South Korea, although this expectation could be applied only to workers in big firms. Big companies provided their workers with lifetime employment, in the exchange of workers' sacrifice and loyalty, because they worried about labor shortages.

As a result, the meanings of work for most Koreans encompassed the loyalty and sacrifice of self to their companies, as well as other things, in the exchange of lifetime employment. The notion of lifetime employment, particularly for workers in big companies, was an unspoken agreement between the worker and the employer, thus discouraging workers from moving to other companies.³ At the same time, companies provided their employees with relatively substantial benefits, including health insurance, support for children's educational expenses, intensive retraining programs, and summer vacation camps for workers' families.

What has changed since the economic crisis in South Korea is that the economic crisis accelerated labor market flexibility, which has affected the difference on meanings of work held by its citizens. When the economic crisis hit

³ Before the economic crisis and restructuring of the labor market, employees' frequent movements from one company to another were not considered to be favorable. Changing one's own company several times meant his or her inability to adapt to new environments and people. However, since 1998 employees, particularly in high-tech industries such as computer related workplaces, have been moving more freely than before, looking for higher salaries and better working conditions. Contrary to before, changing companies in search of good payments has been regarded as the recognition that workers with credentials and abilities could move to different companies.

the country, companies escape the turmoil by closing their factories and laying off their workers. Many of Koreans lost their jobs suddenly while the Korean government did not have appropriate welfare policies to protect the unemployed. At the same time, the Korean labor market has become extremely segregated by education and gender, a trend that has been accelerating since 1987, when labor market segregation by a size of firm started to become severe (Noh, 1998: 4).

In this situation, the meaning of work perceived by Korean workers has been narrowed significantly, resulting in workers' increasingly expecting temporary and contracted work, rather than lifetime employment. Work no longer provides secure wages, and the collapse of seniority in the labor market tends to expel older employers. Therefore, it is important to understand the power of structural changes in the labor market and rapid social changes after the crisis in changing individuals' ideas and thoughts about work.

Macroeconomic Changes and Well Being

Macroeconomic changes, including rapid economic growth, economic instability, and economic recession, have been examined widely in relation to well-being. Durkheim was the first sociologist who investigated the social phenomena of human well-being empirically. In his influential book *Suicide*, Durkheim (1897, 1951) argues that business crises increase anomie resulting in higher rates of social pathology, including suicide. Durkheim (1951) explains the mechanism as follows;

If therefore, industrial or financial crises increase suicides, this is not because they cause poverty, since crises of prosperity have the same

result; it is because they are crises; this, disturbances of the collective order..... Whenever serious readjustments take place in the social order, whether or not due to sudden growth or an unexpected catastrophe, men are more inclined to self-destruction. [247]

However, Duckheim's correlation between suicide rates and the economic cycle had not been confirmed empirically until the end of the 1960s when Pierce (1967) tested an association between suicide rates and the absolute rate of change in the economic cycle, applying the Durbin-Watson d-statistic. After Pierce's work, many sociologists have paid attention to examining the health effects of various economic changes, using mostly quantitative methods.

Brenner pioneered research on the health effects of macroeconomic changes by specifically examining the relationship between unemployment rates and mortality rates in England and Wales. In his study, he claims that fluctuations in mortality can be largely explained by current and lagged unemployment rates. Also using archival data, Brenner (1969; 1973) was able to determine the age, sex, educational attainment, and diagnoses of patients admitted to all public and licensed private mental institutions for each of the 54 years he analyzed. Brenner chose the annual percentage of New York State's work force engaged in manufacturing jobs as a measure of economic status and found a strong negative relationship between total first admissions and the manufacturing employment index. While the use of aggregate retrospective data precluded disentangling the intervening factors between economic change and institutionalization, these findings demonstrate that the relationship is more complex than the intuitive unemployment.

A critique of Brenner's time-series analysis of the impact of unemployment on mortality in England and Wales has been published elsewhere (Gravelle, Hutchinson and Stern 1981).⁴ The authors argue that the fundamental problem in establishing a causal relationship between unemployment, ill-health and mortality is that the incidence of unemployment is disproportionately concentrated in particular groups. It is not that the individual characteristics of skill and health cause a particular level of unemployment, but that a given level of unemployment, even if generated entirely by the demand for labor (or the lack of it), is not distributed at random across individuals. Consequentially, not only are the unemployed likely to be poor when out of work, but they are also much more likely to be in poverty or at its margins before they become unemployed (Stern 1983:62).

Thus, the relationship between unemployment and health is greatly complicated by the strong association between unemployment and poverty (Stern 1983: 62). Survey data on the unemployed alone do not allow for control of health as a selection factor that increases the likelihood of becoming unemployed. A longitudinal survey, unlike a cross- sectional survey, makes it possible, at least in principle, to try to control for poor health as a selection factor for long unemployment durations, but the mutual interaction between ill-health and long spells of unemployment is still very difficult to disentangle.

⁴ H.S.E. Garvelle, G. Hutchinson and J. Stern, "Mortality and Unemployment: a Critique of Brenner's Time Series Analysis", *The Lancet*, 26 Sept 1981, *The Lancet* 17 October 1981 and 27 November 1981).

Unemployment and Well-being

The most prevalent feature of a given economic crisis is the incidence of mass unemployment. Research on the experience of unemployed individuals has consistently shown that unemployment of more than a few weeks' duration causes physiological stress, which leads to raised blood pressure and an increased risk of heart disease (Svensson 1987). A large body of research shows that high levels of unemployment and economic instability significantly increase the levels of mental- health problems and also have adverse effects on physical health, not only of the unemployed but also of their families and the community in general (WHO Regional Office 1983).

Most previous research agrees with the negative consequences of job loss for the unemployed and their family members. People who have lost their jobs have been found to be more anxious, depressed, unhappy, and dissatisfied with life in general (Warr, Jackson, and Banks 1988, R.C. Kessler, J.B. Turners, and J.S. House 1988). The unemployed have been found to have lowered self-esteem, to be more short-tempered, to be more fatalistic, and to be more pessimistic about the future (C. Layton 1987; R. M. Cohn 1978) .

One of the problems unemployed workers find most troubling is the lack of companionship (Leana and Feldman 1988:7). The day-to-day interactions with co-workers are gone, and many laid-off workers become more withdrawn or reluctant to share their negative feelings with friends (Leana and Feldman 1988).

Three patterns of relationships concerning friendship have emerged from the empirical research. First, the more time unemployed workers spend with

friends, the less depressed and anxious they become. This friendship network not only mitigates psychological distress, but also provides stronger social pressure to get a job (Warr, Jackson, and Banks 1985). Second, the longer the period of unemployment, the more laid-off workers reduced the number of their social contacts. As their social network shrinks, the unemployed rely increasingly on a fewer friends for support. Third, many acquaintanceships developed through shared activities seem to decline over time as well, as unemployed workers cut out social entertainment requiring money (Warr 1984; Jackson 1988).

Unemployment and Family

Work provides social status and economic resources for the family and therefore sets limits on its standard of living (Mortimer and London 1984:21). Considerable research has documented the harmful consequences of marginal employment and unemployment for the family (Rubin 1976; Elder 1974; Sennett and Cobb 1972; Steinmetz and Strauss 1974; Schorr and Moen 1979). Because work is the only source of income for most families, families undergo sacrifices and strains to meet the demands of employment, even when these accommodations cause deterioration in family relationships (Piotrkowski 1978).

Sudden, unpredictable unemployment has devastating effects on individuals and families. It introduces a set of stressors into an individual's life situation and family system with no opportunity for preparation, either psychological or financial (Voydanoff 1984: 61).

In addition, unemployment affects other family members and the functioning of the family as a system. In his analysis of work experience and

family life, Furstenberg (1974:355) states that “economic uncertainty brought on by unemployment and marginal employment is a principal reason why family relations deteriorate.” Unemployment is related to family instability and family functioning in the areas of marital power, family violence, spending behavior, division of labor, and parental authority and discipline (Voydanoff 1978).

One of the persistent myths about unemployment is that it is no longer a cause of hardship, as it was in the past (Kenneth 1987). Income can be characterized as a measure of the resources available to families and the opportunities open to them for various kinds of consumption (Kenneth 1987). Financial hardship frequently results from the unemployment of a family earner. The extent of hardship has been defined in two ways: (1) an income level insufficient to meet family needs and (2) economic deprivation, i.e., the loss of at least 30 per cent of the income earned before unemployment (Elder 1974; Moen 1980). While these hardships may occur independently of each other, both are related to patterns of family functioning (Elder 1974).

The magnitude of individual and family financial hardships depends upon eligibility for unemployment insurance and other benefits, the length of unemployment, and prior income level (Voydanoff 1984:62). Company and union policies influence the extent of financial hardship associated with layoffs and plant closings. Short-term financial hardship is reduced by policies such as a continuation of fringe benefits, especially health insurance, severance pay based on length of service, and the vesting of pensions (ibid. 62).

Research suggests that the negative consequences of job loss ripple outward to affect family, friends, and co-workers as well (Leanna and Feldman 1992: 6). First, wives of the unemployed suffer psychological problems similar to those of their husbands, albeit now with the same intensity or immediacy. Wives, too, often experience an increase in hostility, anxiety, depression, and psychosomatic illnesses.

Second, job loss seems to contribute to the rate of marital separation and divorce; some studies show that laid-off workers separate or divorce their spouses at three to four times the rate of employed workers. Third, unemployment is associated with negative changes in family climate. Husbands and wives faced with unemployment often report significantly less cohesiveness and supportiveness, and significantly more conflict in their families than do members of control-group families (R. Liem and J. H. Liem. 1979)

Despite a large body of previous studies on the link between unemployment and the family, very few research has focused on thorough investigations on the question of how social norms regarding gender affects the nature of spousal relationships and development of coping strategies in the family of an unemployed head. While the dominant norms of gender role affects individuals' different perception of their unemployment and family relationships, individuals with a traditional gender identity, including both men and women, tend to suffer from forced role changes due to unemployment of one of the partner than those with a flexible gender identity. It is also crucial to identify how

individuals living in various countries and regions understand their unemployment in relation to their family members.

Unemployment and Health

Evidence linking unemployment with morbidity and mortality is prevalent in literature on the sociology of health. Since unemployment reduces the resources available for health care and creates stressful situations for laid-off workers and families, problems of mental health such as stress and depression are exhibited among the unemployed. Stress-related negative health outcomes that have been attributed to unemployment include higher mortality rates, increased risk of heart attack, low birth-weight off-spring, various infectious diseases, chronic respiratory diseases, ulcers and gastrointestinal disorders, alcoholism, depression, suicide, accidents, and possibly cancer (Broadhead et al 1983; Cassel 1976; Cobb 1976; House 1981).

The most important of this body of research has been the work of Brenner (1978, 1984), who correlated increasing unemployment rates and other changes in labor market activity with the increase in various health ills such as cardiovascular ills, cirrhosis diseases, suicide, infant mortality, homicide, motor vehicle accidents, child abuse, and psychiatric admissions. Brenner finds that, after five years of economic downturn there was a sharp increase in psychological symptoms, measured by increasing suicide rates and psychiatric hospital admission rates.

Brenner's (1987) multivariate time-series analysis of data for nine industrialized countries found that, while unemployment and business failure are

positively related to heart disease mortality, economic growth shows an inverse relationship with these factors. Using the unemployment rate as a measure of economic recession, Brenner argues that not only do the unemployment rates provide a general indicator of recession at the national level, but also that unemployment itself, rather than taken only as a measure of recession, is a significant factor in increasing risks of heart disease. Some evidence indicates a measure of absolute economic change in communities – the sum of job starts and terminations in manufacturing industries – correlated with aggregate number of stressful life events (Catalano & Dooley 1977), the rate of depressive symptoms in a population (Catalano & Dooley 1977, 1979; Catalano et al 1981). Catalano and Dooley (1977) tested several hypotheses concerning the longitudinal relationship between change in the Kansas City economy and surveyed mood and life events. Their results show that much of the variation in mood and life events could be accounted for by prior (one to three months) change in economic conditions. Also, combinations of metropolitan and regional unemployment provide significantly better predictions of community mood and life changes than either alone.

Dooley and Catalano (1983) find that in a longitudinal study of 6,190 subjects -- at least for middle-SES respondents-- economic contraction affects the incidence of undesirable job and financial events that consequently, increase the risk of illness and injury. Pavalko et al (1993) conducted research on patterns of career mobility among middle class men and the implications of these patterns for their longevity, using life history data from the Stanford-Terman study. They find

that, while relatively few men in this study experienced a period in which they moved through a series of unrelated jobs, those who did had a higher mortality risk. Similarly, men who progressed early in their careers but then remained stable in later periods tended to be at a greater risk than those who progressed in both time periods.

While these studies have contributed to uncovering causal mechanisms between unemployment and adverse health consequences in various ways, they have not examined individual variations in the mobilization of social resources that are beneficial to well-being. It is clear that the manner and degree of the person's reaction to unemployment vary by the nature of the person's social support system. For example, while some people might react to their unemployment status with extreme stress, others may think that being unemployed is an opportunity to rest or to obtain more education. These kinds of individual variations have hardly been investigated. Gore (1978), who conducted a study on two plant shutdowns, finds that the socially unsupported had significantly higher elevations and more changes in measures of cholesterol, illness symptoms and affective responses than did the supported. Several features make the design of this study appropriate for an examination of the effect of support: (1) Job loss and unemployment are socially significant stressful experiences and have several health effects (see Karl, 1974); (2) the study is longitudinal, allowing for a better examination of causal evidence; and (3) all cases suffered an involuntary job loss (Gore 1978:159).

Ross and Milowsky (1995), using longitudinal data from a national probability sample, examine the selection hypothesis that healthy people obtain and keep jobs more than unhealthy people do, and found that initial health significantly improves the odds of full-time employment at the end of the study period, adjusting for initial employment status. They also report that full-time employment predicts slower declines in perceived health and in physical functioning for both men and women. This finding is significant in uncovering the effect of social selection on being employed, which has been rarely researched, as well as variation in the employment effect of health between men and women.

However, work-related stress also causes adverse effects on health, particularly, in societies where social protection and public services for workers are weak. For example, Lin and Lai (1995) examine the stress-distress model in the context of a Chinese urban center, Tanjin. They hypothesized that 1) the stress-distress relationship should hold across societies, and 2) work stressors, particularly conflicts at the workplace, are more significant in urban China than in Western urban settings. Results from a community survey of Tianjin residents in 1986 support both the generality of the stress-distress model and the specificity of the effects of work-related stressors. Lin and Lai (1995: 1133) point out that in the case of urban China, the politically-imposed stratification system arranges individuals and family lives around work units and these work units dictate all aspects of the life of the worker and his or her family, ranging from housing, major purchases, access to local and distance facilities, schooling and employment for children, to retirement pension and funeral expenses. As a

result, relationships in the work context are expected to produce stress-inducing conflicts.

Tausig and Fenwick (1999), in their employment panel study of full time workers who experienced the 1974-77 recession in the United States, report that the economic recession increased mean levels of distress and dissatisfaction, and that unemployment experiences themselves contributed a substantial (10%) percentage to changes in distress as well. As with other studies that analyze the relationship between aggregate unemployment rates and the recession on aggregate levels of distress and dissatisfaction, their study explains the impact of aggregate levels of distress and dissatisfaction, and therefore they fail to explore the question of how this recession affects individual's mental health. Also, different impacts of the recession may have influenced individuals differently with respect to individual well-being.

In a cross-level analysis, Dooley and Catalano (1984) suggest that economic contraction can lead to increased help-seeking by increasing the incidence of symptoms and by increasing prophylactic (asymptomatic) use of facilities. These findings support the general proposition that the social environment affects both disorder and help-seeking in a systematic and -- at least in the case of economic contraction -- intuitive way.

The conventional wisdom of unemployment research is that unemployment is associated with a marked decline in self-esteem. Most literature in the field links the unemployment experience either to loss of self-esteem, damaged ego, loss of self-worth, loss of self-respect, loss of self-confidence, or

feeling inferior. First, unemployment may be accompanied by a change in the social position of the individual (Warr 1983). Secondly, having lost a job may be interpreted by the individual as a sign of personal inadequacy, and such self-blame may intensify the negative impact on self-esteem. Furthermore, job-seeking efforts almost inevitably involve experiences of rejection and failure, which may further harm self-esteem (Seligman 1975). However, the effect of unemployment on self-esteem and self-respect has not been examined systematically across social class, or in relation to individuals with active or passive style of social involvement. In addition, it little is known about whether individual's self-blame in the face of job loss would be affected by macroeconomic situations; that is, whether people in severe economic situations tend to blame the government and policy makers who fail to provide a favorable job market for workers, or to blame themselves for their failure to obtain employment.

Life Stress and Well-Being

1) Social Stressors

The hypothesis linking stressful life events and the onset of distress and disorder has become the leading thrust in theoretical development and research programs in social epidemiology since the mid-1960s (Lin and Ensel 1989).⁵ In general, research shows that life stress exerts a significant but moderate influence on mental and physical well-being. Conceptualizations of stress usually

⁵ For example, Holmes and Rahe 1967; Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend 1981; Myers, Lindenthal, Pepper, and Ostrander 1972).

emphasize the following elements: a state of arousal resulting either from the presence of social environmental demands that tax the ordinary adaptive capacity of the individual or from the absence of the means to attain sought-after ends (Lazarus 1966, Pearlin 1983, Menaghan 1983). External circumstances that challenge or obstruct are labeled stressors; stress refers to internal arousal. Thus, stress is not an inherent attribute of external conditions, but emanates from discrepancies between those conditions and characteristics of individual needs, values, perceptions, resources, and skills (Aneshensel 1992:16).

Much of this paper is organized around what have come to be recognized as the domains of the stress process: stressors, stress mediators/moderators, and stress outcomes. To a large extent, these arrangements determine the stressors to which people are exposed, as well as the manner in which they experience stress (Pearlin 1989: 241). Many stressful experiences do not spring out of a vacuum but typically can be traced back to surrounding social structures and people's locations within them. The most encompassing of these structures are the various systems of stratification that cut across societies, such as those based on social and economic factors such as class, race, and ethnicity, gender, and age. To the extent that these systems embody an unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and self-regard, a low status with respect to these structures may itself be a source of stressful life conditions.

Stressful life conditions may result from a low status with respect to the systems that embody an unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and self-regard. At the same time, changes in social structure such as economic recession

and political upheaval are most attributes to the stressful lives of lower- class individuals. The essential element of the sociological study of stress is the presence of similar types and levels of stress among people who are exposed to similar social and economic conditions, and who are thus incumbents in similar holes arising from similar situations. Therefore, a salient feature of sociological research on stress is its concern with the socially patterned distribution of components of the stress process: stressors, mediators, and outcomes (Pearlin 1989: 243).

Stressors refer to the experiential circumstances that give rise to stress. Pearlin divides life events and chronic strains. Life events were firstly studied by Hans Selye (1982), who provided an important theoretical foundation for event research. Extrapolating from the implication of Selye's observations of laboratory animal's responses to environmental changes, the theory held that all change is potentially harmful because all change requires readjustment (Pearlin 1989:244). Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend (1969) propose that social class differences in rates of life-event change generate corresponding class differences in rates of psychological impairment. Specially, changes that are undesired, unscheduled, nonnormative, and incontrolled are most harmful (Faibank and Hough 1979; Thoits 1981; Vinokur and Sltser 1975).

Chronic strains as stressors involve the relatively enduring problems, conflicts, and threats that many people face in their daily lives (Pearlin 1989). Liem and Liem (1978) criticized studies that failed to consider the chronicity of stressors among lower social classes, such as lengthy unemployment among

working-class men. According to Avison and Turner (1988), chronic strains, event-related stressors, and time-ambiguous events all contribute independently to depressive symptomatology, but chronic strains are most potent.

2) Social Resources and Psychological Resources

Stress theories address that resources mediate or buffer the effect of stressors, while the process of stress-buffering through resources has not been fully investigated. Wheaton (1985) defines resources as moderating the effect of stress and/or as suppressing the effects of stress (not mutually exclusive). A resource that moderates the effect of stress (interaction version) points to a condition, or set of conditions, under which stress has substantially less impact (usually defined by the presence, or possession, of the resource as opposed to its absence). A resource that suppressed the effect of stress (the additive version) is generally mobilized by increases in stress and as a result dampens its overall causal impact. Ensel and Lin (1991) classify resources as either psychological or social. Psychological resources are possessed by an individual whereas social resources are embedded in one's social network. As previously discussed, however, one's psychological resources are often not independent of the social resources that strengthen one's psychological well-being through personal relationships with others as well as through material and symbolic assets that the person possesses. Thus, it has to be clarified that all the social and psychological resources are related to the social structures and environments that an individual maintains. In addition, these psychological and social assets enable an individual

to deal with problematic encounters and experiences if such problematic encounters and experiences do arise (Lin 1986).

Pearlin (1989) includes mediators such as coping, social support, and the self-concepts of self-esteem and mastery. Coping refers to the actions that people take on their own behalf as they attempt to avoid or to lessen the impact of life problems (Pearlin and Schooler 1978). Pearlin (1989) argues that important elements of coping may be learned from one's membership and one's reference groups in the same ways as other behaviors are learned and internalized. Social support involves networks and supports. Networks are more directly than supports to the structure of people's social attachments. Most people's attachments include some mix of formal and informal, primary and secondary, and strong and weak ties. Social support represents the resources that one actually uses in dealing with life problems. One's sources of support in dealing with any given stressor will be much more restricted than one's total network. Social support, especially socioemotional support, is related inversely to diverse forms of psychological disorder, physical morbidity, and mortality (e.g. Turner 1981, Aneshensel and Stone 1982, Turner 1983, Kessler and McLeod 1985, Wethington and Kessler 1986, House et al 1988, Moen et al 1989, Ross and Milowsky 1989).

Lin and Ensel⁶ (1989: 383) explain that the mediating effect (sometimes referred to as the intervening effect) is said to occur when the incorporation of the social support factor reduced the direct effect of life events on physical health or

⁶ According to Lin and Ensel (1989:383), the independent and mediating effects of social support have received strong confirmation (see review by House and Kahn 1985) and, likewise, a number of studies have provided evidence for buffering effects (see reviews by Kessler and McLeod 1985).

mental health. The buffering (interacting) effect is said to occur only if the simultaneous presence of life events and absence of social support exert a detrimental effect on physical health or mental health.

While social support can be characterized as an external form of coping resources, internal or psychological coping resources have come to play a major role in the etiology of both mental and physical health (Folman and Lazarus 1980; Kobasa et al. 1981; Pearlin et al. 1981; Wheqqaton 1983; Gore 1985). Concepts such as sense of mastery, feelings of personal competence, self-esteem, and locus of control have come to be viewed as personality factors (resources) that influence an individual's reaction to life events or stressors and may buffer or reduce the impact of a stressor on subsequent illness (Gore 1985; Wheaton 1983).

Symbolic-interaction approaches assume that, through taking the role of specific and generalized other, people come to conceive of themselves in terms of important social roles and derive their self-evaluations, at least, from the adequacy of their role performances (Burke 1991; Rosenberg 1979; Stryker 1980; Thoits 1992). Based on this assumption, Thoits (1994) explores the process of stressor and problem-solving. She argues that there are two subtypes of problem-solving actions: reversals and extrications. In the face of negative events or chronic difficulties in a particular domain, individuals can reverse or convert a negative situation to a positive one minimally to a less negative one. Alternately, individuals may extricate themselves from a negative situation by voluntarily relinquishing the problematic role. The distinction between reversals and extrications becomes arbitrary when a role is abandoned, lost, or simply absent.

However, the difference between sociological and psychological studies of stress is that sociological research is concerned with the socially patterned distribution of stressors, mediators, and outcomes, while psychological research pays attention to characteristics of personality and psychological traits. In the sociological approach, the structural contexts of people's lives are understood as the key sources of hardship and privilege, threat and security, and conflict and harmony (Pearlin 1989).

3) Life Stress Paradigms

Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend (1981) summarize various formulations of life stress processes and the psychological and social contexts in which they occurred. Each formulation (hypothesis) is shown to provide viable conceptual linkages between life events and health outcomes and to have received some empirical support (see Figure 1-1).

The Dohrenwends' Models: Physical Health as the Outcome Variable

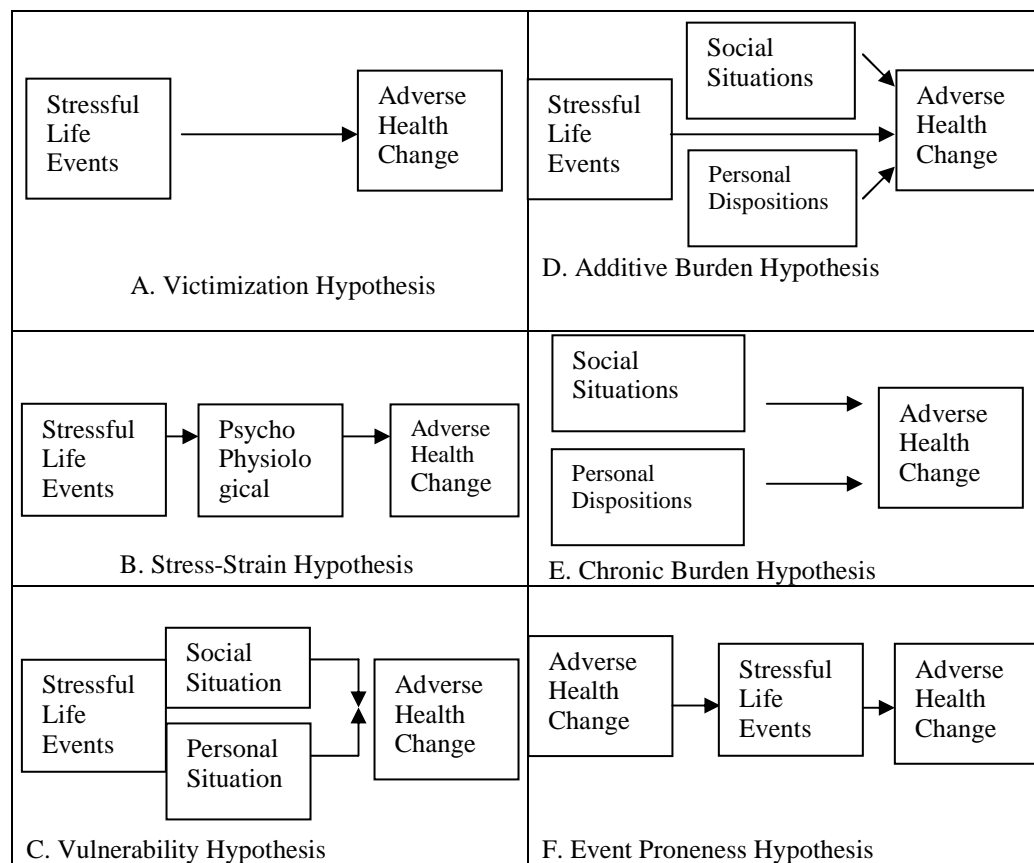
The hypotheses in these models share two common features: (1) the ultimate dependent variable is adverse health or adverse health change, rather than mental health disorders, and (2) each hypothesis delineates and explains the possible empirical association between life events and health (Lin and Ensel 1989: 384).

The first model, the victimization hypothesis (Model A), postulates the direct effect of extreme social situations (natural disasters, prison camps, etc.) as well as a variety of everyday happenings. An intervening variable, psychological strain, proposed by Langner and Micheal (1963), is introduced in the stress-strain

hypothesis (Model B). This model, which suggests that individual variation in psychological strain problems. Alternately stated, the hypothesis postulates that when one encounters life events, the absence of personal and/or social resource will increase the likelihood of health problems.

The additive burden hypothesis (Model D) also considers situation and personal characteristics but sees these as factors in addition to stressful life events in affecting health status. The next hypothesis, the chronic burden hypothesis (Model E), posits that it is stable personal dispositions and social conditions rather than transient stressful life or other nonpathological response.

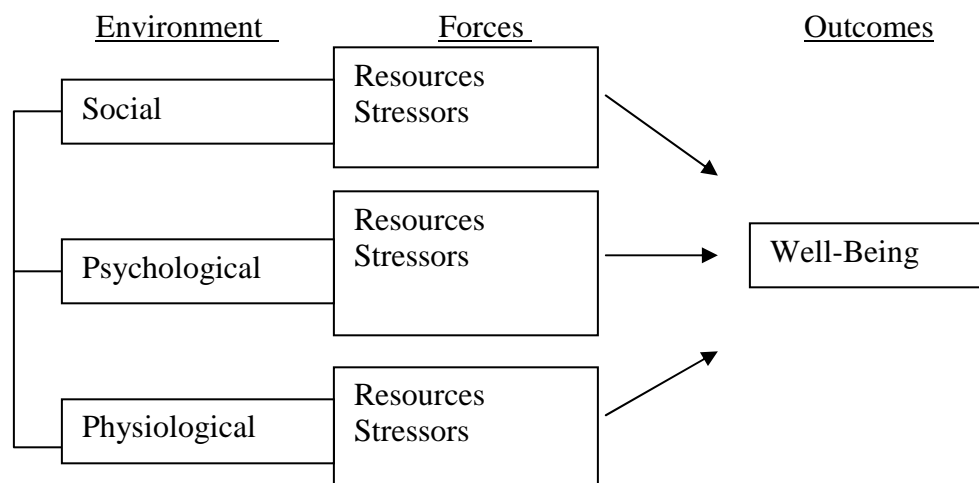
Figure 1-1: Six Models of the Life Stress Process as Proposed by Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend (1981: p.20)



In a further attempt to explain individual differences in responses to stress, the vulnerability hypothesis (Model C) proposes that preexisting personal dispositions and social conditions interact with life events to produce adverse health consequences. This model is generally known as the interaction of buffering model. That is, in the absence of personal and/or social resources, experiencing life events increases the likelihood of health events which bring

about adverse health changes (Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend 1981:22). The event proneness hypothesis (Model F) infers a reversal of the causal relationship between life events and health problems in that adverse health change is considered as the primary cause of subsequent experiences of stressful life events, which consequently exacerbate such health changes.

Figure 1-2: The Life Stress Paradigm Revised by Lin and Ensel (1989:387)



While Dohrenwends' model has not been fully tested, Lin and Ensel (1989) propose a revised paradigm of the life stress process. First, they point out that the Dohrenwends' formulations do not consider the hypothesis that life events may serve as a mediating or buffering factor between social psychological factors and individual well-being. They also point out another hypothesis that

social and/or psychological resources may mediate or buffer the impact of social or psychological stress on individual well-being (Lin and Ensel 1989:386).

In the revised paradigm, the three environments and their responsive factors are identified as the exogenous concepts impinging on well-being outcomes. Their effects on the outcomes can be specified as (1) direct effects, (2) mediating effects, and (3) interacting or buffering effects. Direct effects are self-explanatory. For example, social resources will have a direct impact on well-being, even when other factors are taken into account.

A mediating effect of a factor on well-being is said to have taken place when its presence reduces the direct impact of another exogenous factor on the outcome concept. A typical example of the mediating effect would be social resources' ability to reduce the direct effect social stressors exert on the outcome.

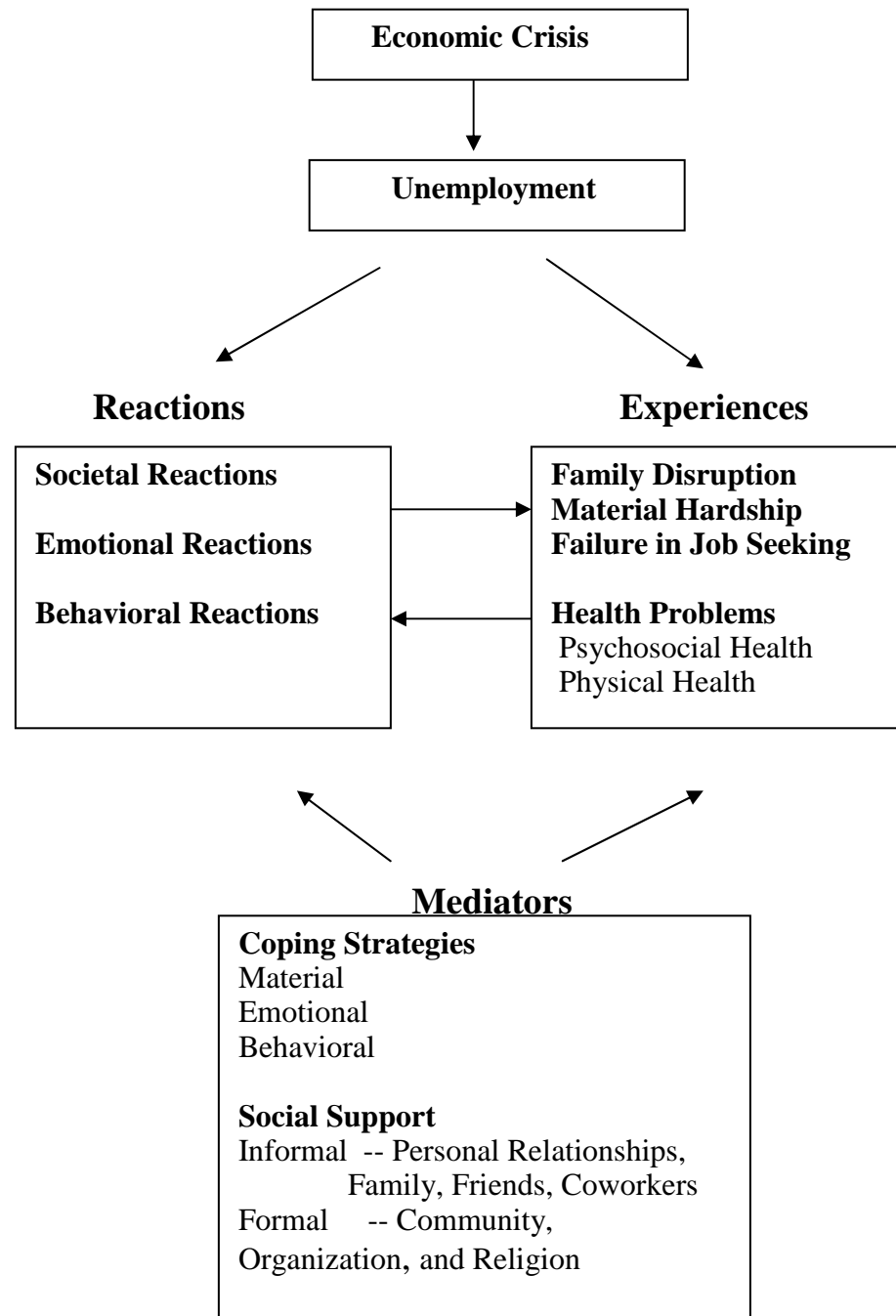
A buffering or interacting effect is said to have taken place when the joint presence of two exogenous factors impacts on well being. A typical empirical model of this nature would be that, only when one encounters social stressors (i.e., life events), the absence of social resources (i.e., the lack of social support) has a detrimental effect on the outcome concept (i.e., physical symptoms).

1-5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework drawn from the qualitative data in this study summarizes the relationship between unemployment caused by the economic crisis and a variety of reactions and experiences perceived by respondents. The economic crisis in South Korea from the end of 1997 to the present also can be

viewed as a significant factor that influences the adverse effects on well-being at the individual level. This paper examines three aspects related to unemployment: a given individual's reactions, experiences, and coping mechanisms. First, the incidence of unemployment affects three types of reactions, societal, emotional and behavioral. Second, the unemployed individuals experience a variety of negative impacts on their lives, such as material hardship, failure in job seeking, family disruptions, and health problems. Third, these negative feelings and experiences could be buffered and mediated by the coping strategies and social support that the individuals might develop and adopt to deal with their problems.

<Figure 1-3> Impact of Unemployment on Individuals' Well-Being



Using the stress life paradigm, this study views the incidence of unemployment as a stressful life event, which is harmful to overall well-being. Well-being is measured by physical and mental health status, life satisfaction, happiness, and life excitement. As the most detrimental factor to material and psychosocial well-being that people could experience through their lifespan, unemployment during economic recession is a serious condition that causes adverse health outcomes. An increase in unemployment rates is the most salient feature during a period of economic crisis. According to Tuner (1995: 215), the health impact of job loss can be reduced in situations in which the aggregate community-employment situation is favorable (i.e., low unemployment rate, high job availability), because the workers are confident of regaining income before severe financial deprivation occurs.⁷

At the same time, being unemployed forces people to reduce material, medical, educational, and recreational consumption. During the unemployment periods, people often tend to cut off health care expenses because they think visiting doctors and taking physical examinations are too luxurious. Thus, unemployment during an economic recession causes a variety of life stresses associated with the shock of job loss and its impact on material destitute.

Figure 1-3 summarizes a theoretical framework designed to examine the association between unemployment and well-being, and to test the effects of social resources that buffer and mediate the negative effect of unemployment on

⁷ However, two other studies (Cohn 1978; Platt and Kreitman 1985) find precisely the opposite – that unemployment appears to have its greatest emotional effects in favorable employment situations. In their study with the working class unemployed, the emotional effects would not be greater than material effects or psychological effects in the relation to the material deprivation.

well-being. As a stressful life event, unemployment occurred by one of impacts of economic crisis indirectly causes adverse well-being outcomes through intervening variables such as income loss, material deprivation, psychosocial symptoms, reduced social resources and downward social mobility. The model also assumes that social resources at both individual and community levels would buffer and mediate the negative impacts of unemployment on well-being. The following sections explain various components of the model: intervening variables and effects of social resources.

Social Resources and Well-Being

This study assumes that negative impacts on well-being can be buffered and mediated by the degree of intensity of social resources the unemployed possesses. Social resources in the present study are divided into two categories: individual and community types. Individual categories include social network, social support, and social ties embedded in the person's individual relations to family members (spouses, children, and parents), friends, coworkers, neighbors, and significant others. These individual categories provide more intimate, emotional, and supportive relationships, which are very beneficial to health. Community categories include resources embedded in individuals' social networks such as religious, political, cultural, and economic involvement in the community. These categories provide important information related to work, useful community resources, and broader social ties.

Figure1-4: Categories and Intensities of Social Resources

	Strong	Weak
Formal	Type A	Type B
Informal	Type C	Type D

This study presents a social resource matrix shown in Figure 1-4. Social resources vary in degree of quality and quantity. Social resources may be formal or informal. For example, a formal relationship is one with coworkers while an informal relationship is the one with a spouse. Social resources may be strong or weak. In general, familial relationships are stronger than other formal relationships. Type A in the cell matching formal and strong characteristics in Figure 1-4 shows social resources characterized as strong and formal relationships such as strong relationships with coworkers, religious organizations, and political involvements. This relationship is beneficial to the unemployed seeking a new job because social ties with formal relations are assumed to provide broader and abundant information about job searching beyond narrower individual ties. Type B is categorized as a formal and weak relationship, which is also informative in terms of its boundary beyond narrow individual ties, but its weak nature is not necessary to provide beneficial relationships. Type C, with informal and strong

relationships, involves the relationships with family members and close friends who provide a number of social and emotional supports. The relationship of Type D assumes informal and weak ties the individual possesses in his or her social networks that provide both emotional and psychological supports relatively weak compared to the Type C relationship.

Effects of Social Resources

There are two hypotheses, which explain the impact of social resources on health. The first hypothesis, known as the main effect, assumes that social resources enhance health and well-being irrespective of stress level. The second hypothesis, known as the buffering effect, indicates that social resources protect people from the pathogenic effects of stressful life events (Gore 1986; Kessler and McLeod 1986). Main effects generally occur when the support measure assesses the degree to which a person is integrated within a social network, while buffering effects occur when the support measure assesses the availability of resources that help one respond to stressful events (Cohen and Syme 1986).

The direct-effect hypothesis argues that such a direct benefit could occur as a result of the perception that others will provide aid in the event of stressful occurrence or merely as a result of integrated membership in a social network. The perception that others are willing to help could increase overall positive affect and in elevated senses of self-esteem, stability, and control over the environment. These psychological states may thus influence susceptibility to physical illness through their effects on neuroendocrine or immune system functioning (Jemmott and Locke 1984), or through changes in health-promoting

behaviors (e.g., decreased cigarette smoking, decreased alcohol use, and improved diet or exercise patterns).

In contrast to the direct-effect model, the buffering hypothesis argues that support exerts its beneficial effects in the presence of stress by protecting people from the pathogenic effects of such stress. In this model, support may play a role at two different points in the stress-pathology causal chain (Cohen and McKay 1984; Gore 1981; House 1981). First, support may intervene between the stressful event and the stress experience by attenuating or preventing a stress response. Second, support may intervene between the experience of stress and the onset of the pathological outcome by reducing or eliminating the stress experience or by directly influencing responsible illness behaviors or physiological processes.

The present study applies these two hypotheses to the relationship between well-being and unemployment as a stressful life event. The first hypothesis here is that the unemployed with high levels of social resources are more likely than the unemployed with low levels of social resources to perceive the stressful life event as a less distressful and frustrated situation. More resource holders also might think that social networks around them would help them economically and emotionally in the situation of being unemployed. These individuals tend to possess a more positive view about their future and more survival strategies successfully to deal with the stressful life event.

The second hypothesis used in this study assumes that social resources intervene between the experience of stress and negative outcomes on well-being by seeking help from others in the individual's networks. Individuals with more

social resources are easier to get a variety of support in the face of unemployment. Coping with stress involves serious failure and rejection for those who possess relatively weaker social resources.

1-6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Method

The present study is based on a qualitative research method that applies in-depth interviews with unemployed individuals living in three cities in South Korea including Seoul, Incheon, and Wonju. At the same time, additional data were collected by interviews with civil servants in government agencies and with personnel in non-profit organizations that provide public services for the unemployed. The unit of analysis is the individual rather than the population, which is frequently measured by the previous studies on the impact of macroeconomic change on health outcomes. Rather than the population, the unit of individual is useful to examine a variety of experiences and reactions as well as of social resources and coping strategies that the unemployed perceive as being available.

While there have been a number of studies on economic crisis and unemployment since the economic crisis of 1997 in South Korea, this is the first study based on in-depth interviews with the unemployed. Most previous studies on the subject have been based on survey research methods, which would give us more general explanation of the unemployed rather than detailed information on

each individual. The qualitative research based on in-depth interviews with the unemployed was concerned with the research question of how individuals react to and cope with their unemployment. First, in-depth interviews make it possible for one to learn about individual experiences and coping strategies during the unemployment duration. Second, the detailed information helps explain why certain experiences happen to some people, but not others, and how they deal with their situations.

Data Collection Procedures

The outbreak of economic crisis at the end of 1997 interested the researcher in sociological inquiries of the unemployed who had lost their jobs in South Korea mainly due to the economic recession. It was a shock that South Korea, one of four Asian dragons⁸, the tenth largest economy in the world at that time, collapsed and entered the structural adjustment program of the International Monetary Fund. Exclusively enough, the crisis has hurt most Korean workers who made their livings wages. Although it is widely known that many of Koreans, particularly from the upper and middle classes, tend to save quite much of money for their future and emergency situations, their savings could not last for more than three years. When the researcher visited Korea in January 2001, when the economic crisis had been going on for three years, numerous people said that they suffer economic difficulty in 2001, than at any time since the crisis started. They

⁸ South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong

ran out of savings, assets, and other valuable items. On top of that, they were getting older at a time when people over 40 years of age were severely excluded from the labor market and encouraged to retire. Moreover, their children started to spend huge amounts of money on education. Providing a good education to children is a top priority to most Korean parents who have suffered from economic hardships and discrimination at work, and who think that acquiring a good education is one of a few ways to achieve upward social mobility. Many of respondents in this study said that their biggest concern was a child education.

The fieldwork was carried out during the winter from December 2000 to January 2001 in Seoul and Wonju, and during the following summer from May to June 2001 in Seoul and Incheon. This study employed a variety of qualitative methods. Thirty-two unemployed Korean men and eight service providers in organizations for the unemployed and homeless were interviewed. The sample members were asked about the impact of unemployment on their personal lives, on the relationship with family members and friends, on previous job experiences, on coping and survival strategies, and their thought about the future and society. The respondents were contacted through their connections with civil organizations and government agencies. Other sources of contacting the informants included putting advertisements on the internet and on the bulletin board of public libraries. Some of informants were found through the researcher's personal connections. The organizations visited during the winter fieldwork

included House of Freedom, and Dong-A Engineering Labor Union in Seoul, and the Center for Providing Free Meals in Wonju. During the summer fieldwork, the researcher visited Jongro-Ku office, Job Placement Center of the Ministry of Labor in Seoul, Dong-Ku office, and House for Sharing Hopes in Incheon.

All individuals cited in this study have been assigned pseudonyms. Interviews took place either in the offices provided by the agencies or by the interviewer, according to what was convenient for a given respondent. Each interview lasted two to four hours, and was tape-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Unemployed respondents were paid either approximately twenty dollars in cash or in the form of a gift worth twenty dollars.

Participants

Participants in this study are thirty-two men unemployed for more than six months, living in Seoul and its metropolitan areas such as Incheon and Wonju. Table 1-1 summarizes the detailed information on respondents. Their ages range four informants between 20 and 29, eight between 30 and 39, eight between 40 and 49, eight between 50 and 59, and three between 60 and 65. Fourteen respondents are married, seven divorced or separated, and eleven never married. Five spouses among the married had jobs at the time of interview. Respondents had 1.4 children on average at the time of interview, including only one person with four children.

Their educational attainments are three respondents with an elementary education, two respondents with a middle-school education, twelve with a high-

school education, two with some college, three with a junior-college degree, and ten with a college degree. Their most recent occupations were a used furniture store owner, three factory owners, six skilled and semi-skilled construction workers, one security guard, one cook, four managerial jobs in auto shop, transportation company, and engineering company, three engineers, and two never employed after their college graduation.

The reasons for unemployment varied greatly, from business failure to layoff. Two respondents resigned to avoid layoff from their companies, and seven respondents were laid off due to company closures. Four respondents lost their jobs from business failures, and two respondents never entered the labor market after their college graduation. Despite their different reasons for being unemployed, respondents can be divided into two categories: layoffs and business failures. The economic crisis, in general, leads to these two reasons for unemployment. Those who lost jobs due to these reasons suffered very severe emotional, material, psychosocial difficulties, all of which may affect mental and physical health. Business failure involves family disruption and indebtedness more than layoffs, eventually leading to long-term unemployment. Four respondents had their business failure, which led to their divorce and separation from their family or extended family members. Two of the four respondents who experienced business failure lived in a homeless shelter and a local inn alone respectively, and received free meals from the charity agencies. Their relationships with families are disconnected, a situation that makes it impossible for them to ask for help, although they both have very serious illnesses.

Table 1-1: Participants

Name	Age	MS	Ch	Education	Duration	Pre-Occupation	Flows into Unemp	Income
1	32	M	1	High	1yr	Technician	Job Leaver	Public work
2	48	D	1	Junior Col.	5 yrs	Factory Owner	Business Failure	Public work
3	54	D	1	Middle	2 yrs	Construction worker	Job Loser	Public work
4	29	S	0	College	3 yrs	No experiences	Entrant	Parents
5	55	M	0	High	2 yrs	Security Guard	Job Loser	Public work
6	42	M	2	Ele	1 yr	Chef	Job Loser	Savings
7	42	M	2	High	2 yrs	Skilled worker	Company Closing	Wife, saving
8	35	M	1	College	3 yrs	Engineer	Company Closing	Wife
9	50	M	2	College	3 yrs	Manager	Company Closing	Savings
10	65	D	4	High	1 yr	Factory Owner	Business Failure	Public work
11	65	D	2	Col. Drop	5 yrs	Manager in Transpo	Business Failure	Friends
12	28	S	0	High	7 ms	Manager in Auto shop	Job Loser	Public work
13	64	M	2	Col. Drop	3 yrs	Associate Manager	Company Closing	Siblings
14	38	M	2	College	3 yrs	Engineer	Company Closing	Wife
15	39	M	2	College	3 yrs	Engineer	Company Closing	Wife
16	44	M	0	High	1yr	Office job in	Job Loser	Wife
17	34	D	1	High	8 ms	Skilled worker	Job Loser	Parents
18	25	S	0	Ju. Col.	0	No experiences	Entrant	Public work
19	55	M	3	Ele	2 yrs	Construction worker	Job Loser	Public work
20	55	M	2	College	1 yr	Professional	Early Retirement	Savings
21	59	M	3	High	2 yrs	Manager	Early Retirement	Part-time
22	35	S	0	College	3 yrs	English Teacher	Job Leaver	Part-time
23	42	D	2	Ju. Col.	2 yrs	Com. Programmer	Job Loser	Public work
24	36	S	0	College	4 yrs	Computer Designer	Company Closing	Public work
25	40	S	0	High	1yr	Skilled worker	Job Loser	Public work
26	42	S	0	High	7 yrs	Skilled worker	Job Leaver	Public work
27	36	S	0	College	10 ms	Semi-Skilled	Job Loser	Public work
28	41	S	0	High	2 yrs	Construction worker	Job Loser	Public work
29	24	S	0	High	1 yr	Office job in	Job Loser	Public Work
30	52	S	0	Ele	2 yrs	Construction worker	Job Leaver	Public Work
31	59	M	2	College	3 yrs	Own Business	Business Failure	Friends
32	42	M	2	High	2 yrs	Skilled worker	Company Closing	Wife, saving

MS: marital Status, Sp: separated, Ch: the number of children, Duration: duration of unemployment, Ele: Elementary School

Analytical Variables

This study presents the analyses of data based on the theoretical framework mentioned earlier in this chapter, examining four variables: 1) social class, 2) reasons for being unemployed, 3) family structure, and 4) age. These four variables contribute to understanding different outcomes affected by the unemployment among informants because of the assumption that no respondents experience the same types of psychosocial feelings and deal with the problems in the same way.

1) Social class

Class retains its sociological potency and promise as a means of understanding the social world (Scambler and Higgs 1999: 275). Work may have different meanings for different people. Turner (1995: 214) points out that the unemployed working class suffers more from financial stress while the middle class suffers more from reduced self-esteem and social status. Hamilton et al. (1990) also acknowledge that, if one considers only the financial burdens associated with unemployment, one would expect the mental and physical health consequences of job loss to be the most severe among individuals of lower socioeconomic standing. Morse and Weiss (1955) suggest, that for many people in middle-class occupations, working represents something interesting to do, having a chance to accomplish things and the opportunity to engage in a purposeful activity, whereas those in working-class occupations may view working as virtually synonymous with activity, the alternative to which is to lie around being bored and restless.

Furthermore, the middle-class job imposes a responsibility for an outcome, for successful sales, for successful operation of departments, or for successful handling of legal cases. For a person in a middle class occupation life, not working would be less purposeful, stimulating, and challenging. The researchers go on to suggest that the content of working-class occupations emphasizes work with tools, operation of machines, and lifting and carrying, with the individual probably oriented to the effort rather than to the end.

In particular, the health impact of unemployment on lower-class individuals is much more detrimental than among individuals from the upper class. There are three reasons that might explain it. First, the economic crisis has deepened income gaps between the rich and the poor. The investigation on earnings by social class in Korea shows that the upper 20 percent has benefited from the sudden economic crisis due to overvalued US dollars⁹ against the Korean Won. Second, lower class individuals are more likely to lose their jobs because they are more likely to work in vulnerable industrial sectors.

Additionally, they are rarely covered by unemployment compensations such as retirement pensions and unemployment insurance. The sample of this study shows that of thirty-two informants, only nine were eligible for the benefits of unemployment insurance and pension. The determinant of social class in this study includes levels of education, previous occupations and income levels, and the degree of material possessions including assets and houses.

⁹ It was reported that since the crisis, more luxurious items, such as imported brand name of clothes, shoes, and jewelry, have been sold in the major department stores in Korea. Also, right after the economic crisis, interest rates rose dramatically, which affected the capital accumulation of the rich, although the interest rates have fallen into approximately 6 percent of the annual interest rate.

2) Reasons for being unemployed: layoffs, leave, and business failure

The reason for being unemployed is important as much as the duration of unemployment for the well-being of individuals as well as their families. Tracing the working experience of respondents showed that the reasons for an individual's unemployment is so complicated that they cannot be explained by a single word. Some who leave their companies for the reason of unsatisfactory treatment from their employers would try hard to get another job, but fail, because their reemployment would be extremely difficult if the recession started immediately after they quit the previous job. A respondent who quit his job because of lower levels of satisfaction with payment says:

(22:1) I deeply regret quitting my job. I ask myself why I did not endure and I could have tolerated it a little more. I was young at the time, so I did not have enough patience. It was okay to have a job when I moved from one company to another, but the bad economic situation changed so rapidly that I could not get a job anymore. After 1998, job opportunities became severely limited.

Others who were self-employed and failed in their small businesses during the economic crisis lost all their assets and properties as well as their jobs. This study includes the unemployed who lost their jobs because of these three reasons: layoffs, business failures, and quitting jobs but failing to reenter the labor market. These different reasons for being unemployed affect different degrees of psychological and material hardships among the unemployed. Those who lost their job due to business failure tended to be affected more severely than those who experienced layoffs and voluntary resigning.

In particular, the effect of business failure on health was very apparent, often affecting heart disease, hypertension, and other chronic diseases usually

among older unemployed. Psychological shock from layoffs and business failures was more severe than from voluntarily resigning. Since business failure often accompanies debts, which cause more material hardships and psychological burdens, it frequently leads to family disruption and relationship problems with friends and relatives. Therefore, those who experienced business failure tended to leave their families more often than those who experienced other types of unemployment. This study includes four informants who lost their jobs due to business failure and who reported their experiences of mental and physical illnesses directly caused by the stress of business failure.

3) Family Structure – living with family /living alone, married/unmarried, working spouse/children, and family atmosphere

Looking at family structures is a complicated process in the fact that the form of an extended family gives way to nuclear families, families headed by a single parent to households without blood connections among their members. It is also true that the unemployed from the lower class are more likely to live without family members and to be never married than those from the middle class are. Even before losing their most recent jobs, many respondents had been divorced or had marital problems.

In particular, single father-headed families in this study had a great deal of difficulty in securing a fulltime job due to childcare. These families are very vulnerable to any kinds of changes in the labor market. Many of single fathers in this study used to have very insecure jobs, mostly in construction before their current unemployment, which would be the reason for their family disruption.

The irregular nature of construction work helped them deal with their childcare duties, providing a moderate level of wages during the peak of the economy. The economic crisis, however, affected reduced work in construction more rapidly than in other sectors, and cut thousands of construction jobs and huge portions of wages. Thus, it is significant to understand how different types of family structures influence unemployment and how the combination of family structure and previous occupations affects different degrees of survival and coping strategies.

4) Age

Age affects unemployment significantly. An early retirement would not sound shocking in the Western world where job performances at work are considered more important than seniority, and where higher employment rates have led to a variety of measures to lay off workers if companies found the need for labor reductions. In contrast, seniority was a long tradition in some Asian countries such as Korea and Japan. Older employees had been paid higher and worked less, holding important positions and receiving a lifetime employment from their companies. The introduction of early retirement was very new to most Koreans until the 1990s. The introduction of early-unemployment policy affected those over 55 years of age as a first step of laying off workers, and within three years even those over 40 years of age became a subject to being laid off and thus worried about reemployment. Therefore, the psychological and material impacts of unemployment would vary in severity between the younger and the older unemployed.

In contrast, younger people suffer from other types of employment barriers. Since companies prefer experienced to inexperienced workers, one's initial ability to enter the labor market is extremely limited. Many of young people who graduated from school after the economic crisis and had no work experiences suffered from the restriction to employment. Other people who voluntarily quit their jobs failed to successfully reenter the labor market during the recession.

CHAPTER 2: THE SETTING

Without learning a social environment, which shapes individuals' values and thoughts, one cannot understand the individuals' reactions to their life events. Unemployment reflects a variety of social conditions and economic features. This chapter begins by explaining the historical context of economic development in South Korea. After looking at the nature of economic development and the overall level of the population's health status, it examines the effect of economic crisis on unemployment and on specific policy development that is intended to rescue the unemployed and their families in South Korea.

2.1 A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Republic of Korea had achieved rapid economic development since its independence of 1945 from Japanese occupation. In particular, through the Korean War of 1950-1953, Korea lost its most economic and industrial bases, and was divided into South and North Korea. Backed by the U.S. economically and militarily, South Korea adopted capitalism based on import-substitution industries right after the Korean War. In the 1950s and 1960s, South Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world with a level of GNP of US\$ 67.

Development began to take place with an export-oriented strategy by the Park Administration. The export-oriented strategy politically and economically favored firms that intended to export their products abroad. In order to be competitive, firms forced workers to work long hours, prevented the forming of

labor unions, and paid below minimum wages by workers. These harsh labor environments frequently brought out workers' violent protests. Students, peasant, and the urban poor joined the protests, but the armed forces and the police crushed basic workers' rights. The nation began to develop economically and the GNP grew rapidly. In 1980s, South Korea witnessed even more rapid economic development due to the economic boom caused by three components: the lower valued dollar, cheaper energy prices, and the lower valued yen against the dollar. As a result, the period from 1960 to 1989 had witnessed an 8.9 percent of economic growth rate on average (Lee, H. K. 1992). Such a rapid export-drive economic growth policy accelerated modernization, industrialization, and urbanization. Moreover, it affected changes in social structure as a whole and in individual attitudes and values. Traditional values had been destroyed without fully achieving modern belief and value systems (Yang 1995).

The introduction of National Medical Insurance System in 1989 has contributed to improved health conditions. The national insurance system consists of an employment-based system and region-based system, and Medicaid, which provides for the poor usually below minimum wages. This national insurance system was a product of fierce anti-government movements in the 1980s when most citizens, along with workers and students, protested against the military dictatorship and finally gained the right to elect the president. It is claimed that the introduction of the national-insurance system in the country was a retreated policy adopted by the illegitimate government in order to consolidate its control of the political system in the face of an accelerated collective anti-government

mood. The similar level of welfare to the current policies was formed by the adoption of social-welfare laws in the 1960s and the enactment and reforms of social welfare related laws in the 1970s and in the beginning of the 1980s. In particular, after the democratization movement in 1987, the government actively enacted and reformed welfare related laws. While this would be a very dramatic achievement in social welfare, the level of social- welfare provisions still remains too low to call the nation a welfare state.

2.2 POPULATION HEALTH STATUS

The general health status in Korea has greatly improved in the past three decades as shown by the change in the life expectancy and infant mortality rate. The main causes of death in 1960s were pneumonia, respiratory diseases, and tuberculosis, while the causes now are various cancers, cardiovascular diseases, and accidents. In particular, about 60 percent of mortality is associated with chronic and degenerative diseases such as cancer, heart diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, hypertension, and chronic renal diseases (Song et al. 1993). Recent improvements in living conditions have brought about reduced prevalence rates of communicable diseases. However, negative life styles such as bad eating habits, overwork, lack of physical exercise, and smoking and drinking behaviors have contributed to the growth of chronic diseases. Social economic pressures in Korea have affected workers both physically and mentally, calling for large-scale social and health programs.

Table 2-1: Health Outcomes and Inputs

Health Outcomes	1960	1975	1980	1990	1995
Infant mortality (per 1000 live births)	133	29	17.3	10	8.8
Life expectancy at birth	53		65.9	72	73.5
Male			62.7	67.4	69.5
Female			69.1	75.4	76.6
Population Coverage of National Security Program			29.8	91.1	95.3
Access to Safe Drinking Water			54.6	78.5	82.1*

Source: Data of National Statistics and Health Outcomes and Inputs (Yang 1997) were synthesized by the researcher.

* 1994

A demographic transition has taken place with the change in high fertility and mortality rates in the 1960s to low fertility and mortality rates in the 1990s. Table 2-1 provides information on various health measures from 1960 to 1990 in South Korea. Between 1960 and 1995, infant mortality rates declined dramatically from 133 to 8.8 , while life expectancy rates increased from 53 to 73.5 percent. Table 2-1 also shows a big improvement in life expectancy at birth, infant mortality, access to safe drinking water, and the coverage of national security program from 1980 to 1995.

2.3 ECONOMIC CRISIS AND UNEMPLOYMENT

In the middle of November in 1997, South Korea experienced a severe economic downturn with a devaluation of the Korean currency. Its foreign debt increased from \$105 billion at the end of 1996 to \$120 billion in September, 1997 (Chang 1998:1556). The share of the total debt increased from an already high 43.7% in 1993 to an astonishing 58.2% at the end of 1996.

In January 1997, a new major steel company Hanbo went bankrupt. Kia, the third biggest automobile producer, the 8th biggest *Chaebol* (conglomerates) in the country, first showed signs of trouble in June 1997. The Kia saga was unfolding during an especially unfortunate time when the Southeast Asian financial crisis broke out, starting in Thailand. The high ratio of short-term foreign debt and certain high-profile bankruptcies, combined with the fall-out from the Southeast Asian crisis, prompted the crisis. According to Chang (1998), the South Asian crisis contributed to the Korean crisis in a number of ways. First of all, the contagious effect meant that the confidence in all Asian economies, and not just the Southeast Asian economies first affected by the crisis, was shaken. The falling demand in Southeast Asia meant a drop in exports for Korea, while some of the Korean financial institutions which invested in the region were hard hit by the collapsing stock and especially bond markets. Korea lost at least \$2 billion in exports, and possibly more in the Southeast Asian financial markets, since the outbreak of the crisis.

Within a month of the launch of its Korean bail-out program in December 1997, the IMF had backed off from its earlier conditions. More than 100 firms were going bankrupt per day in mid February 1998 and created unprecedented levels of corporate bankrupt and unemployment (ILO Report 1999). South Korea introduced an IMF austerity policy in 1998. The Kim Dae Jung government had no other option but to accept the terms of the IMF intervention, whose main expressed goal was economic stabilization. Even though the ruling party was supported by workers, the middle classes and intellectuals, its power to force the

conglomerates to restructure was very limited. The austerity policy was likely to raise popular discontent against the Kim government. With inflation above 10 percent, a large proportion of Koreans suffered from wage cuts and drastic increases in interest rates in 1998. Mass unemployment had lowered consumption and deepened the recession.

In 1998, the government undertook four important tasks under IMF surveillance: legalization of lay-off for labor market flexibility; privatization; reform of financial institutions; rationalization of *chaebol* firms. Under the IMF structural adjustment programs, the beginning of 1998 witnessed a decrease of 7.7% in GDP growth rate which was the lowest after the end of 1980 when Korea experienced a debt crisis. GNP for 1998 also decreased by 5.3% from the previous year. The National Statistics Office in South Korea announced that the number of the unemployed had almost tripled in the year after the IMF intervention, reaching 1,850,000 at the end of 1998. The unemployed rates soared from 3.1 percent in December 1997 to 4.5 per cent in January, 5.9 per cent in February, and 7.4 percent in December 1998 (The National Statistics Office 1998). Statistics for the period from 1961 to 1998 show that the GDP growth rate fluctuated between 5 and 15 percent except for a sharp drop to -5 percent in 1981. Inflation was also unstable during the 1960s and 1970s, culminating at 29 percent in 1979, the year when the Yushin regime collapsed with the assassination of President Park. Since then, inflation has been relatively stable throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, the foreign debt crisis terminated the stability and inflation went up to 13 percent within a few months of the IMF intervention.

President Kim has attempted to expand government intervention in order to keep the Social Compact, allocating a very large special budget to this policy area. The unemployment budget for 1998 amounted to US\$ 11 billion, one third of which was reserved for unemployment benefits and living allowances; a small portion was for job creation, job replacement and job training. The sums allocated represented about 13 per cent of the government budget for 1998. The allocation was increased to \$US 16 billion in 1999. As far as the size of the policy was to alleviate the burden on employers by permitting the right of lay-off, policymakers believed that foreign capital would come back once the right of lay-off was guaranteed, and unemployment would then be resolved naturally (ILO Report 1999). At the beginning of policy implementation, however, the unemployment rate was still expected to go up as a result of the massive downsizing of *chabol* firms to be completed in the second half of 1999.

2.4. CHANGES IN UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Table 2-2: Unemployment Rates, 1994-2001.

(Unit: Thousand Persons, %)											
	2001*	2000	1999 Oct.	1999 Sept.	1999 Aug.	1999 June	1998 Oct.	1998 Sept.	1997	1996	1995
Num of Unem			1,021	1,069	1,241	1,349	1,537	1,572			
Unem Rates	4.2	4.0	4.6	4.8	5.7	6.2	7.1	7.2	2.7	2.0	2.0

Source: National Statistics Office, *Employment Trend*

* March 2001 only.

Note: ILO unemployment is based on a week employed search period.

South Korea had kept very stable and low unemployment rates between 2 and 3 percent from 1988 to 1997.¹⁰ The unemployment rates in the 1990s stood below 3 percent. The high unemployment was new to most Koreans who had enjoyed almost full employment over 30 years except for a couple of years during the financial crisis.¹¹ Consequently, the government and people in South Korea were not prepared well to deal with detrimental consequences of recent high levels of unemployment. Unemployment insurance was introduced as recently as 1995. In fact, the government has allocated tremendous budgets to prepare for unemployment programs since the economic crisis of 1997, but many of alternatives have not been effective to alleviate social problems caused by high unemployment.

Since the intervention of the International Monetary Fund in the end of 1997, unemployment rates skyrocketed from 2.1 percent in August of 1997 to 8.1 percent in August of 1998. The high unemployment rate was unprecedented during the growth years. The unemployment rate in July 1998 peaked 7.6 percent¹², resulting in 1.65 million of unemployed people, an increase of 1.18

¹⁰ The measurement of unemployment rates include those who are over 15, who are able to work, and who want to work and those who work less than an hour in the survey week. Those excluded are soldiers, those who are attending school or vocational training, those engaged in housekeeping, those too old to work and those who have other reasons for inactivity (Kim, S. K. 1989: 23-4).

¹¹ Since the late 1970s, corresponding to changes in industrial structure, it was led by the increase in irregular work. The achievement of the full employment can be partly explained by the increase in irregular workers (Kim, W. J. 1997: 80).

¹² The unemployment rate in 1998 estimated by the Federation of Democratic Workers, one of biggest coalition of trade union in Korea, was 17 percent with 3.87 million unemployed workers. The reason for this big difference in the unemployment rate between the government measurement and the unions' estimate is that 1) the official statistics excluded disappointed unemployed people from the unemployed and put them into the category of the non economic population, 2) it did not include unpaid family members who work at home and are recently increasing, and 3) did not reflect the daily contracted construction workers whose half are unemployed (Kim, T.H. 1998).

million compared to from that of the previous year. According to government figures, the number of people who became unemployed in the process of economic restructuring last year surpassed one million. In April 1999, the government figure put the unemployment at 1.55 million, a rate of 7.2 percent. This figure excludes over 300,000 to 400,000 unemployed people who are given odd jobs through the workfare program (KCTU, 2002). The real unemployment figure is expected to more than 4 million, if the people engaged in short part-time work and unpaid family work are included.

As shown in Table 2-2, unemployment rates went down to 4.6 percent by the end of 1999, but the impact of unemployment on social sectors are hard to be overcome in a short period of time. The tendency of market deregulations made it hard for the government to intervene in companies' decision on layoffs. Dramatic wage cuts have contributed to a significant decrease in consumer's purchasing power while inflation went up fast.

The recent increase in unemployment comes from the increased number of daily and temporary workers.¹³ At the same time, regular workers' unemployment is increasing due to structural changes in the big industries. In particular, 800,000 construction workers had lost their jobs in 1998, and a 40 percent of homeless people living in the Seoul Station¹⁴ were former construction workers (Pak, 2000:2). Despite the economic recovery, jobs available to the construction workers remain low, accounting for 70 percent compared to that of

¹³ Temporary workers are those whose employment is based on contract between employers and employees, including part-time workers; daily workers, based on daily contract.

¹⁴ Since the IMF bail-out in the end of 1997, a number of people have started to live in public areas such as train stations and subway stations in major cities. Among other places, the Seoul Train Station is the place where the largest number of homeless people stays.

1997. According to the employed population of 2000 published by the government, the total number of workers in construction industries was 1.65 million, excluding workers in informal sectors. If one includes those in informal sectors, the number would be over 2 million, 15 percent of all employees in South Korea. Pak (2000:2) explains that 75 percent of the construction workers in South Korea can be categorized as temporary and daily workers.

Construction workers in Korea get jobs mainly through the following three processes: 1) personal relationships, 2) job-connection companies, 3) human labor market, and 4) labor unions. Getting jobs through personal relationships is not an easy way for new job seekers because these relationships can be created only by many years of work experiences as a member in a team, which consists of approximately ten workers, including carpenters, cement workers, bricklayers, and unskilled assistants. Team members work together with contracts and move from one contract to another. Thus, building these relationships for many years and acquiring qualified skills in the team are essential to get the job. The second method is through job-connection companies, which require workers and contractors to pay for connection fees. The unemployed interviewed in this study who had worked for construction work mentioned that job connection companies assign jobs on daily or weekly basis and take off 10 percent of daily wages automatically as a connection fee. The downturn of construction industries in South Korea accelerated the boom of job-connection companies, where many of the unemployed go to pursue construction work. The third method occurs simultaneously between workers and employers in the human labor market. The

employer picks workers in the human labor market, where the contracted wage is higher than the work through other job connections. The last one is that in rare cases labor unions connect some construction work to their laid-off union members as a member service (Pak, 2000:3).

Women's unemployment increased rapidly, and even employed women have tended to have more irregular jobs. The increased number of irregular positions also affected higher levels of married women's participation in the labor force. Another trend in the labor market is a dramatic rise in unemployment of previously unemployed individuals (Korea Research Institute for Labor, 1998: 22). However, the case of being unemployed from layoffs was only 16.8 percent in July 1998, while the case of being unemployed from limited job availability and business failure was 43.7 percent in the same year. In 1998, the rate of the household without wage earners was 19.4 percent.

2.5 CHANGES IN THE LABOR MARKET

During the 1990s, firms in South Korea started introducing policies related to labor market flexibility¹⁵ to manage the labor force effectively. In particular, the IMF adjustment program adopted by the Korean government in 1997 contains the articles on labor-market flexibility policies along with the additional measures to promote the reconstruction of the labor force and the strengthening of functions of unemployment insurance (Kim 1999). Among overall wage workers in Korea,

¹⁵ Kim (2000:2) defines the labor market flexibility as the measures maximizing the discretion of corporate owners who want to control the size of labor force and the amount of income, and minimizing restrictions of the government and labor unions in the labor market.

contingent workers account for 47.2 percent; part-time workers, 5.9 percent; dispatched workers, 2.8 percent; subcontracted workers, 0.6 percent; and home workers, 0.2 percent (Chung 2000:9). Between 1990 and 1997, a total of wageworkers had increased by 3.0 percent per year, but 47.5 percent of these were contingent workers.¹⁶

The economic growth in the 1980s became slow due to the oil shock in the end of 1970s. The increase in service areas accompanied by the transition from heavy and chemical industries to technology and intelligence-intensive industries accelerated changes in the industrial structure. Therefore, the beginning of the 1980s saw the economic adjustment along with the policies that included the privatization of state-funded companies and the liberalization of banks. After the economic crisis, the government started actively adopting neo-liberal economic policies such as removals of a variety of restrictions, allowing the economy to be operated by the free-market competition, structural adjustment, privatization of public sectors, liberalizing layoffs in the labor market, and the introduction of dispatched workers and flexible work hours.

Dramatic increases in unemployment had damaging effects on those people who have jobs. Regular workers were threatened by dismissal and replacement with contingent workers. As a result, the proportion of workers with open-ended employment has dropped below 50 percent of employed workers. Work intensity has increased inhumanely; workers have been forced to accept

¹⁶ According to Chung (2000: 12), during the same period, 61.2 percent of female workers had temporary positions while 36.9 percent of male workers had the positions. Between 1997 and 1998, a decrease in male workers and female workers was 3 percent and 15.4 percent, respectively but 94.6 percent of male workers lost their jobs from temporary work while 83.3 percent of female workers lost their regular jobs (Chung 2000: 12).

massive cut-backs in wages; and their working hours have increased (KCTU 1999). At the same time employers are stepping up their drive to atomize workers by introducing an individual salary system in order to consolidate the control over workers.

2.6 UNEMPLOYMENT POLICIES IN SOUTH KOREA

One of the distinctive characteristics of the Korean welfare system is the fact that most cash-benefit programs are work-related contributory programs (Kwon 1999: 84).¹⁷ South Korea has entered a world of low growth and high unemployment from one of high growth and low unemployment since the IMF bail-out at the end of 1997. The rate of unemployment reached a peak at 8.7 percent in the second quarter of 1999 in Korea. Such a high rate is very serious for most Koreans who rely on income for children's education, health care, and care of the elderly. For these reasons, Cho (1999) points out that the unemployment rate at an 8.7 percent in Korea has the equivalent shock as that of 13 percent in Europe.

Table 2-3: Unemployment Rates and the Number of Unemployed after the IMF Bail-out in 1998

(Unit: Thousand person, %)									
	1997	1998				1999			
		1/4	2/4	3/4	4/4	1/4	2/4	3/4	4/4
Num.of unemp	551	1182	1458	1600	1586	1762	1785	1704	1550
Rates of unemp	2.6	5.7	6.9	7.4	7.4	8.5	8.7	8.1	7.2

Source: Korea Ministry of Labor

¹⁷ The Public Assistance Program is the only non-work-related and non-contributory program in the Korean welfare structure (Kwon 1999:84).

It is not surprising that the high rate of unemployment was accompanied with the high rate of poverty in South Korea. According to a report released in the Korean Institute for Health and Society (hereafter “KIHASA”) and IBRD, the poverty rate of 1998 in South Korea increased by twice compared to that of 1997 and the main reasons for being poor had changed from illness and aging to the wage reduction by unemployment or insecure employment.

Table 2-4: Distribution of Poverty Rates in Urban Households in 1997 and 1998.

(Unit: %)

	1997				1998		
	1/4	2/4	3/4	4/4	1/4	2/4	3/4
KIHASA*	9.1	9.4	10.1	8.9	16.2	18	21.6
Bu of Stat**	8.1	8.8	9.7	8.9	15.5	17.4	21.0
IBRD	7.0	9.2	8.9	9.5	17.0	21.2	23.9

* Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs. ** The Bureau of Statistics

Estimated the rate of urban households, which show a household spending below poverty line.

Source: Park (1999) and Moon (1999).

The new regime started with the IMF intervention in the end of 1997 and set its plans based on the free-market economy with the ideology of neo-liberalism. Its welfare policy emphasized a balanced welfare state, productivist welfare, and welfare pluralism (Chung 1998). These welfare policies are generally seen as appropriate for highly advanced countries rather than the country like Korea, which has a very low level of social-welfare provision. That

is, if the policy were implemented with the ideology of neo-liberalism, the nation's welfare system would have evaded even during the recession.

In particular, the unemployment policies introduced after the economic crisis emphasize workfare, where the main idea is to support only those who are able to work. The possible consequence of the workfare is not to make people out of poverty by providing the opportunity to participate in the labor market, but to ensure that even eligible welfare recipients will lose their right to receive the benefit if they do not work. Thus, rather than constructing a social safety net, it is apparent that the welfare plan would work for only those who are able to work, while excluding those who need social care and support for a while to be able to work.

The government's unemployment policy presented in 1999 focused on the assumption that the problem of unemployment would be solved automatically if the economy maintains growth and thus opening many jobs. Therefore, the unemployment programs include public work, limited subsidies for the poor, and public loans for secure living. The policies introduced by the government in the face of the economic crisis comprise four main objectives: job creation and keeping, job training, social safety net, and construction of job data banks (see Table 2-5).

Table 2-5: Unemployment Policies After Economic Crisis in South Korea

Job creation and job keeping	Job training	Social safety net	Constructing informational system
<p>Rapid economic structural reform</p> <p>Development of service industry and expansion of SOC investment</p> <p>Subsidies for companies' labor hiring</p> <p>Stability of small-medium sized companies</p> <p>Promoting employment abroad</p>	<p>Job training for increasing new intellectuals</p> <p>Development of effective job training programs</p>	<p>Expansion of recipients of unemployment insurance</p> <p>Wage support through public work program</p> <p>Proving subsidies and protection to poverty-stricken class</p>	<p>Constructing job safety-net</p> <p>Constructing database and profiling for the unemployed</p>

Table 2-6: Welfare Budgets for the Protection of the Unemployed in 1998 and 1999 in South Korea.

	1998	1999	(Unit: 0.1 billion won) 1999 (Supplement)
Total	46,437	62,600	76,599
Paid Unemployment insurance	8,500	15,102	15,102
Loans for the unemployed	7,500	6,382	11,382
Wage bond	1,900	-	-
Daily public work	450	-	-
Subsides for retuning to rural areas	220	20	170
Tuition support for children of the unemp	1,000	2,000	2,128
Lunch for starving children	74	342	388
Support for living expenses for persons with disabilities.	398	2,340	2,340
Limited living protection	2,160	4,973	6,020
Existed living protection	13,791	14,531	14,531
Public work program	10,444	16,000	23,500
	-	1,000	-

Source: Korea Institute for Health and Society, Korea Institute for Labor 1999

As Table 2-7 shows, the welfare program that the government started with great ambition after the economic crisis was the public-work program. However, there have been a number of problems with the public-work programs such as the selection of eligibility, the productivity of the program, and the adequate level of wages. The public loan program has also shown such problems; recipients do not exceed 30 percent of all applicants; more people from the upper-middle class received more loans than people from the lower class because applications

required a co-signatory as well as possession of property; thus, it is possible that most of the recipients could become bad-credit holders.

The clear difference between what unemployed wanted and what the government aimed was apparent according to the study on the consumers' satisfaction about the government unemployment policy. Most of the unemployed thought that they are in need of expansion of public assistance, health insurance, pension benefits, and loan programs, while the government has been implementing the policy focused on public work and loan programs (KIHASA 1999; Korea Institute for Labor, 1999).

In sum, the main problem of the unemployment policy implemented by the Korean government from 1998 is derived from its limited and partial approach to solving unemployment, without having systematic welfare policies and providing people's right to maintain basic living standards (Moon 1999).

Table 2-7: The Ratio of the Program Recipients to the Total Number of Unemployed People between 1998 and 1999 in South Korea.

	Recipients	(Unit: the number, %) Ratio of recipients to total the unemployed.*
Unemployment Insurance	164	5.1
Job Training	174	5.4
Unemployment Loans	52	1.6
Living Protection Program	58	1.8
Public Work**	52	1.6
Total	500	15.5

* Total unemployed people of 3,230

** including those who participated in public work program in the past.

Source: Korea Institute for Health and Society, Korea Institute for Labor 1999

Table 2-8: Means of Making a Living in the Unemployed and Non-employed Households between 1998 and 1999 in South Korea.

(Unit: %)

Source of income	Unemployed households	Non-employed households*
Income of other family members	54.5	85.4
Retirement pensions	10.7	5.7
Support from relatives and friends	11.2	7.3
Savings	33.7	26.2
Income from property	3.8	4.8
Income from Selling property	2.4	2.7
Debts	19.6	16.8
Help from Religious (Social) orgs.	1.2	0.9
Help from neighbors	1.6	1.1
Unemployment insurance	7.4	0.8
Public work	6.7	5.8
Government loan	2.3	0.7
Living protection	2.3	1.9
Job training support	4.2	0.2
Income from agriculture	5.1	5.6
Others	3.6	0.8
Total	170.3**	166.7**

* Discouraged unemployed, those who had changed jobs after the economic crisis, and those who are not on economic activities.

** More than 100 % due to multiple responses.

Source: Korean Institute for Health and Society and Korean Institute for Labor (1999).

The effectiveness of the policy might be estimated using the number of the unemployed who are not able to receive one of the unemployment programs. According to Table 2-7, the rate of the unemployed who are getting one of the five unemployment support programs was only 15.5 percent, and if considered recipients who received more than two benefits, the rate would drop to 13.5

percent. Thus, about 86 percent of the unemployed had not received any of public support in September 1998. According to the report released by the government in 1999, a 61 percent of unemployed households were in poverty in September 1998. Since poverty is strongly related to long-term unemployment, the poverty rate was rapidly increasing for the unemployed for more than two months.

In sum, the detailed analysis of welfare policies implemented for the unemployed since the economic crisis shows that most of the unemployed are neither covered nor covered sufficiently. The macro analysis of the economy and welfare policies help us explain why unemployed individuals, specially from the lower class, are less likely to cope with their emotional reactions and material hardships.

CHAPTER 3. REACTIONS TO UNEMPLOYMENT

This chapter attempts to answer the question of how individuals react to their unemployment. Previous studies have explored that the state of unemployment accompanies a variety of psychosocial reactions such as loss of self-esteem and self-confidence, as well as suicidal impulses. This paper argues that the unemployed experience not only negative psychological feelings but also macro-level of reactions to society, the economy, and the government. Since the nature of economic crisis, which encompasses a massive structural adjustment, reveals problems in the economic policies, the unemployed tend to have macro-levels of reactions more than they do under more stable circumstances. The reactions that the unemployed expressed are divided into three categories: societal, emotional, and behavioral reactions.

3.1 SOCIETAL REACTIONS

Since the high unemployment has been caused by the economic crisis in South Korea, it is natural for the unemployed to see their unemployment experiences as not merely an individual matter but also as a social problem that negatively influences individuals' everyday lives. The current problem of unemployment involves the structural adjustment followed by radical changes in the labor market. The fact indicates that unemployment problems are not temporary but much more permanent and structural. As a result, individuals' perception of their unemployment is somewhat different from that in a stable

labor market. Respondents addressed their feeling on society in three different respects: society, the government, and corporations.

Table 3-1: Societal Reactions Perceived by Respondents

SOCIETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid change • Inequality – social ties become more important. • Only the skilled and educated survive
GOVERNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling cheated by the government • Responsible for the crisis but not working for resolving • Inappropriate Policies for the unemployed
CORPORATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer lifetime employment guaranteed • No future in the company • Employee's sacrifice • High competition in labor market

Table 3-1 summarizes societal reactions perceived by respondents about society. Many of respondents felt rapid changes in social norms and values in relation to work and occupations, and more inequality between social classes. The feeling of being discriminated by the level of education and skills was frequently addressed by respondents from the lower class. Many of respondents felt betrayed by the government, which boasted economic growth and introduced welfare policies that are inappropriate and inaccessible. Also, many of them perceived that the government was mainly responsible for the economic crisis, but not working actively to solve the problem.

Society

Rapid Changes

Respondents tended to relate their unemployment in South Korea to the economic crisis of 1997. Even before their job losses, respondents strongly felt that the country was changing rapidly but unfavorably for workers who are less educated and unskilled. It was said that the change in their businesses and their daily lives was dramatic enough to let them sensitively feel the economic crisis. Even during periods of their employment during after 1997, they experienced a hostile work environment marked by sharp decreases in pay, reduced consumption, and high competition among workers. Their feeling of insecurity was great. Four respondents expressed their recognition of dramatic changes in their work environment right before and right after the economic crisis.

A former technician at a government-funded telecommunication firm, a 32-year-old respondent, out of work for a year, with a high school education, explained:

1-1: I realized that this society is changing, and this trend will continue in the future. Such an early retirement was nonsense and never happened in the past.

After losing his job at an automobile repair company, another respondent aged 29 with a high school education, described his experience:

12-1: With the economic crisis at the end of 1997, the business started to be bad, and soon became bankrupt. Auto part suppliers asked us to pay in cash when we ordered parts. We could not afford to buy the parts in cash. I had continued working there by June 2000. Auto businesses were getting worse with the situation that we received very little broken cars to be

repaired. Monthly sales fell from \$70,000 –\$150,000 to \$30,000 – \$40,000 in mid-1997. Monthly wages for employees also went down from \$1,800-\$2,000 to \$1,300.

Working as a trash collector after his doll business failed, a 48-year-old respondent with a junior college education described:

2-30: With the economic crisis, I felt deeply that my trash collecting work was not very good. Before the crisis, thousands of fry pans thrown away were collected per week. Among them, there were many new ones. Many people used to throw away cooking wares burnt with food instead of dishwashing and reusing them. This tendency changed quickly after the crisis. We had fewer pans, and people tended to buy used things.

The Korea official statistics on unemployment trends by industry have shown that construction work was the most vulnerable area of employment during the economic crisis, with 75 percent of the unemployed having worked in this field. One respondent who had worked for more than 30 years as a skilled construction worker explained the changed environment and his frustration in finding a job:

3-4: Construction work was getting reduced, and then so many people who had worked for construction industries started to work as construction workers. Some people who had sold construction supplies closed their businesses and came to get the job. Not much work available, but too many people seeking the work. Competition was extremely high. We had only 10 % of the work compared to that before the crisis. People stopped building houses and subsequently using cement. Now it is an oversupply of labor. We had got \$100 before, but got \$60, later \$30, \$25, recently went up to \$50.

Only the skilled and highly educated could survive

The unemployed relatively less educated with no more than a high school education were more likely than the unemployed with a college education to view that only qualified people could survive in the economic crisis. Thus, they tended

to attribute their unemployment to their fewer skills and limited education, rather than to blame the society for their unemployment. Four respondents noted the importance of qualification and capability to get a job at the same areas in which they used to work. However, while recognizing the importance of ability in getting a job, they felt that the society was not equal because it privileged backgrounds not necessarily related to one's abilities. A respondent who was raised in a foster-care center, and who had no extended families, responded that his difficulty in opening a restaurant was because he did not have personal networks, including a sufficient number of friends and extended family groups who might help him run his restaurant. He thought his elementary school education prevented him from establishing a variety of social relationships.

Another respondent with a middle school education shared his experiences:

3-5: I could not find any construction work. With limited work supplies, people were not willing to share their work with me. I went out early in the morning to get it, but it was useless. When I came back home without finding any work available, I was very frustrated. I could not believe the situation that did not provide work as such. A friend of mine emigrated to a foreign country. Another friend of mine said that this new era requires people to have certifications of qualification in all areas. Only those who have that qualification could get a job. But how can a person with no education like me obtain the qualification. So I realized that only capable people could survive in this society. Such an era has already come, on one hand. On the other hand I could understand how rapidly this country was shaken.

Some unemployed tended to accept the change in social norm that emphasizes meritocracy even in the areas of manufacturing. Two former business owners who shared this opinion also thought that there were plenty of jobs out

there and that only lazy people blame others for their unemployment. However, by social class and previous occupations, the interpretation of their unemployment varied. For example, the unemployed from the upper class who were unemployed due to business failure believed that jobless people were lazy and not willing to work although a plenty of jobs were available.

2-29: I do not care that rich people spend huge amounts of money. I have nothing to do with them because they live in a different area. When I was young, I thought that was not equal. I do not think so now. People live with their abilities. We are born differently from each other. Some people have great talents. They deserve to be rich.

Good ties and Social Networks

The unemployed also seem to realize that the society values one's personal ties and networks with the powerful. As the job market becomes more competitive, those who lack social networks such as school and regional ties tend to have more problems with getting a job.

A respondent with a high school education talked:

1-3: I think now that there are two kinds of people: who were hurt or not hurt during the economic crisis. We were at the same boat, but some survived, others did not. The difference was from their different abilities. Capable people can survive in such a situation. Actually, those who had ability had not been laid off and, more precisely, could not be laid off. However, this nation is controlled by blood ties and personal networks, which are so bad, I think. Though a person does not have ability, he can survive, while a person with abilities could not survive due to a lack of those networks. Ummmm, I did not study economics, do not know anything, and I have never studied this, but I strongly feel that the structural adjustment is not going well.

The Government

Feeling Cheated

Korea's low-unemployment tradition had nearly allowed the government to prepare for welfare policies to support the unemployed. The government introduced unemployment insurance as late as 1995, and its other welfare policies are aimed at encouraging more employment opportunities by investing massively in industries than at providing a social safety net to protect the unemployed. As a result, the government's main welfare policies focus on workfare programs such as providing public work.

Five out of 32 respondents expressed that they felt betrayed by the government, which exaggerated the wealth of the economy and encouraged people to spend much money. Subsequently, they said that the government was primarily responsible for economic crisis but have not taken the responsibility actively, resulting in numerous people out of work. Those who mentioned the government in relation to economic crisis tended to have close connections with civil organizations. Two of the three respondents who obtained public work through a civil organization participated in protests and rallies led by the organization. Another respondent was an active labor-union leader in his company.

A 32-year-old former technician who had worked for a government-funded telecommunication company and resigned due to anxiety about being laid off started working for an organization for the poor and elderly after his

unemployment. His connection with that organization made him realize social issues regarding the poor and unemployed. He stated:

1-3: I mean that people were cheated by the government. The government boasted how a large amount of GNP we had. We thought we were rich. That was prevalent during the Noh administration. Thus, the administration justified its policies, which cheated most of people. People thought that we were really rich, thus leading to over-consumption.

Limited social responsibility and inappropriate policies

Another opinion about the government in relation to economic crisis is that the government did not effectively deal with the problems. Five respondents said that there were no right policies to help the unemployed; rather, the government supported business firms and the rich. In fact, the government believed that Korean economic structure should be reformed to recover from the economic crisis by closing ineffective companies and downsizing the capacity of firms. Many of companies followed closing their factories, some of which did not pay overdue payments and pensions to their workers. The government did not effectively intervene in companies' inappropriate treatment of workers at the moment of company closure. This study interviewed five workers who experienced their company's closing and who struggled for three years to receive their payments. They had worked for more than 10 years in the company, Dong A Engineering Co, a subsidy of the tenth largest conglomerate in South Korea before the economic crisis. Three of the five workers were engineers and two were associate managers.

An engineer, a former union chairman of his company, said:

7-1: I think the government was wrong in not implementing the right policies for the unemployed but in laying down its responsibility to people. In the process of implementing unemployment policies, the government transferred business failures to employees by laying them off without giving overdue payments and retirement benefits. That was neither the right policy nor the right resolution to the economic crisis.

A 54-year-old divorced man joined a local center for the unemployed and has worked actively for not cutting off the welfare budgets for the unemployed. He replied:

3-7: I am used to telling my son that you should study hard and get a high school diploma. You should be independent because the government never takes care of lower-class people like us. The government wastes money on useless things. I work for the elderly in the government welfare center for seniors. The elderly come to the center to get free food and to meet other seniors. I help them with cooking and serving food. Recently, the government broke down the old building of the center and started to construct a new building. I thought that building a new center, instead of renovating the old building, was wasting taxes. That is too bad.

Corporations

No longer the lifetime employment guaranteed, high competition in the labor market, enforcing workers' sacrifices

Feelings about corporations were related to the collapse of lifetime employment, and increased competition in the labor market, even for the highly educated. Nine respondents who had worked for big companies -- such as a government-funded telecommunication company, an engineering corporation affiliated to 10th largest conglomerates, and a big department store -- addressed that the concept of lifetime employment in the labor market no longer exists. They reported that their loyalty to the company was fruitless and meaningless in a situation where companies lay off their employees at any time. Four younger

respondents, under 40 years of age, responded that they thought there was no future or hope in their companies, so that they did not want to enter the labor force again because companies might fire them again. Thus, rather than being employed at companies again, they want to run their own businesses. If the company does not provide secure positions for their employees, they think that it is irrational to work for that company. Relatively older respondents, all over 40 years of age, responded that they suffered age discrimination and gave up being reemployed by big companies where they used to work. Five respondents who had worked for a long time at a big company, and who lost their jobs due to the company closure, had the impression that companies compensated for their mismanagement by sacrificing employees rather than taking responsibilities.

A 32-year-old respondent, who had worked for six years in a government-funded telecommunication company, felt strongly that he has no future in the company because of the diminishing prospect of lifetime employment and resigned to avoid being laid off.

1-2: I quit my job in 1996 when companies applied structural-adjustment programs such as early retirement to those who had worked for more 20 years in the companies. With the news, I began to calculate my salaries and retirement benefits that I was supposed to get 20 years later. The amount was not big. And I knew one of my close coworkers aged 35 who had worked for 16 years in the company and whose retirement was not far long away. I thought that it was not fair to worry about my layoff or job insecurity that early, but nothing would be guaranteed. This was so different from before because I know that it was firmly guaranteed in the past when workers worked for 40 years, a life-long employment particularly in government-funded companies such as my company. With the changed notion of employment, I thought it is silly to work there anymore. That could not satisfy my hope.

A former engineer who had worked for sixteen years in his company lost a job due to the company closure and could not get overdue payments and retirement benefits at the moment of company closing. With the experience, he said that he lost even the least of minimal trust to the company as a public entity, which should keep a sort of social ethic. His response to the experience was that he was not going to seek employment again in a company but instead planned to start his own business, related to his work experiences in the engineering company.

7-2: At the inception of company closing, I believed that either the parent company or the government would solve the problem eventually because that was the least moral duty they should keep. But the belief was broken. I must not join another company again. My company, one of top ten business groups, was closed, and this will happen to other companies. Over the next 10 years, the situation won't change, I think. I will not live as I have lived for last 10 years. I will do my own business.

Another respondent mentioned severe age discrimination in the labor market.

15-1: It was hard to get a job out there because companies were downsizing and laying off their employees. Job insecurity was a big problem. Those who lost their job in my company had tried to get a new job in similar firms. Getting a job is greatly competitive and younger people are favorable more than older ones like me. There are available jobs for people in their 30s but not available for those over 40.

Extreme Rigidity

Respondents reported that since the economic crisis companies have applied extreme rigid policies to their employees. Companies extended work hours and required more overtime work to workers because remaining workers

should supplement empty positions previously held by their laid-off colleagues. For the reason, not only do the unemployed have difficulty obtaining a job, but also they find that working at a company is very unpleasant because of the rigidity. One respondent revealed that his factory fired him because he noticed his employer that he would be absent for a religious ceremony. He is a devout missionary in his church. He found that some work was not compatible with his religious duties at church. He explained:

27-2: I had several opportunities to get a job in big companies. However, the companies asked me to work on Sunday when I should attend church. I told them I could not work on Sundays in any cases. Then they told me that you do not fit into our company. Or even after having a job, I had to be fired for the reason. So I had to work in small companies as a manual worker.

Loss of a Collective Bargaining

The rigidities in the labor market, which produced more low-paying jobs in place of originally high-paying jobs, and which removed extensive benefits, including health insurance, employer-paid life insurance, social security, and employer-paid pension, paid vacations, tended to influence the attitudes of workers towards avoiding having regular jobs, instead engaging in public work. Their rational calculation between working and doing the public work is heavily influenced by the condition of the labor market. Thus, changes in the labor market affected workers' willingness to reenter the workforce if eligible for the public work. Unemployment, followed by the structural adjustment, resulted in workers losing collective-bargaining power, with many remaining unemployed as a reserve army.

Because of their experiences in repeated failures of getting jobs and in receiving lower wages compared to those before the economic crisis, the respondent felt that employers heavily benefited from the pool of the mass unemployed who might be willing to obtaining low-paying jobs in a highly competitive job market. Meanwhile, because of losing their collective-bargaining power, workers should accept employers' unfair wage contracts and oppressive industrial conditions. These aggressive atmospheres of the labor market, in turn, affected an increase in discouraged workers, who do not want to enter the labor market, who instead performed the public work provided as one of welfare programs to help the unemployed who cannot find jobs. Thus, it is apparent that government policies, aimed to alleviate the problem of unemployment, could not be effective unless the unfair contract between employers and employees is not controlled effectively.

A 42-years-old respondent, who got a junior-college education and had worked as a computer programmer, explained:

23-2: I actively have been looking for a job. What I found was that the economic crisis affects only workers, not companies. The owners of companies make a lot of money because of a higher rate of unemployment. Many of college graduates suffer from unemployment and they will be willing to work for less money. If you don't want to work for low wages, companies do care because there are many qualified people waiting for the job. I am the person whom the company minds hiring because I have ten years of experience in computer programming and should be paid a lot and should be given a managerial position. I am too expensive. The company may hire a newly graduated person at 700,000 won (US\$ 540) a month. I was paid 500,000 won (US\$ 380) a month for an entry-level job when I entered the labor force for the first time. Now, new employees should get between 1,200,000 (US\$ 923) and 1,500,000 won (US\$ 1,153) a month, if it should be similar to my entry salary. Nowadays, people are willing to work for even less money than I

received at that time. I made 20 million won (US\$ 15,384) in 1993 for a managerial work. I can rarely see those who receive that much money now. Experienced workers get paid only 15 million won (US\$ 11,538) a year.

The unemployed also experienced that although there were some jobs available to them, those jobs do not fit into their expectations. Many of blue-collar positions are paid too little to make a living, while other office jobs tend to be part-time or temporarily contracted. The unemployed not only suffer from an extremely limited availability of jobs, but also from a great tendency of job mismatches.

Another respondent gives an illustration of his experience:

22-5: I think that job availability for blue-collar workers is getting better while the professional jobs are becoming very competitive to get. It is much better for those who get a degree abroad or have experiences having lived abroad for a while to get jobs. I think, for them, it would be better if they stay in America. But I don't want to go to America. I am satisfied with living like this. I used to wish to go to America but could not because I did not have enough money for an airplane ticket. I am too old to pursue my ambition now. If you reach my age, you would not be ambitious. I was teaching English at a language school but I could not teach there because I was paid too little. I am not the person who could lie to others to make much money and be very flexible and good-looking. That's the reason that I could not make big money. I want a job paying me 20 million won a year. If it pays me less than 10,000 a year, nothing would leave me. Working all day, spending on transportation and lunch, and nothing is left. However, if you work part-time, even you make less, but you have the rest of time for yourself. I make 60,000 won a month, working part-time. I think unless I make 20 million a year, it would be better to work part-time.

Age barriers

Age barriers in the labor market become more severe and often frustrate persons in the age over 40. However, even persons aged 30s talked about the

frustration related to their age in the labor market. One respondent said that being asked about his age during job interviews made him feel hopeless about acquiring a job. As a computer programmer, a respondent says that his area prefers younger college graduates to older ones. The area considers a person aged over 35 an old man.

23-6: I feel so bad when I was asked about my age while applying for a job. If my age was asked, that means that they don't want me. Many people told me that to get a job, those at the age around 40 were the most difficult time because the age of 45 is regarded as the age of retirement. Quitting your job at age of 35 or 33 is killing your career.

With severe competitions in the labor market, individuals with higher education and the younger look for low-paying jobs and physical work. Thus, individuals with lower level of education and skills have extremely limited opportunities to obtain a job. An informant explained:

25-6: The construction company, which builds an apartment complex recruits many people. But so many people come to get the job and the company selects younger people primarily. There are a lot of 20s who come to get the construction jobs. It becomes more competitive during the winter vacation, because college students also want to get jobs. 30s, 40s, and 50s, very various....usually skilled workers have already been contracted before the hiring. One of problems facing me is that many companies are located in the South Business District, which is far away from where I live. With the traffic jams, it takes me more than one hour to get there. Should take the bus twice. And the companies prefer people at their 30s.

3.2 EMOTIONAL REACTIONS

This section is intended to examine emotional reactions of the unemployed to their job-loss and changes in the feelings as time goes. Work is a major source

of social integration, which structures the way people spend their time, providing a sense of accomplishment and purpose. The sudden loss of this role can result in a period of shock, lowered self-esteem, and anxiety and depression (Voydanoff 1984). Previous studies suggest that the first stage of job-loss is often shock and immobilization. Shortly thereafter, there may be some optimism and minimization of the problem, as the person defines the inactivity as a kind of holiday. Then, as the months draw on with no success finding a job, there is a second broad stage characterized by emotional turmoil, depression, and withdrawal. Here the belief that “the things will be all right” is undermined, and one’s identity comes under strain. With prolonged unemployment, a third stage emerges, involving the scaling down or readjustment of hopes. The individual starts to accept the fact that the standards of the unemployed past are not going to be a reliable basis for evaluating achievements in the present (Burman and James 1988: 190). There is less active distress at this stage, with the emotional trajectory slightly rising and stabilizing (Hayes and Nutman, 1981: 19).

Daniel’s (1974) extensive survey of the unemployed finds that, while the most common reason for being concerned at being out of work was financial, a majority also mentioned the psychological and social costs of unemployment. Boredom and inactivity was the most common complaint followed by depression and apathy. Third was the feeling of failure and uselessness. Finally, a few mentioned the social isolation and feeling of rejection from others because of their unemployed status. Even a cursory glance at some of the case studies of the unemployed shows that the loss of the means for engaging in the “validating

activities” associated with work produced at least a reduction in well-being and, more often than not, feelings of depression, anxiety, and hopelessness. The extent to which such reactions lead to an individual being medically defined as mentally ill -- or whether individuals are able to cope with such reactions without recourse to the medical practitioners -- is not known.

The nature of the sample, collected in this study, with more than 6 months of unemployment, does not properly provide the evidence of the temporal emotional reactions of the unemployed to their unemployment status. However, some of evidence was found when they mentioned their retrospective stories about job loss and work histories. Instead of dividing their emotional reactions into three or four stages, two stages, including an early stage and prolonged stage, are explained in this section. Table 3-2 summarizes types of emotional reactions.

Table 3-2: Stages of Emotional Reactions

Stages	Emotional Reactions
Early Stage	Shock, emptiness, frustration, and being betrayed
Prolonged Stage	Self-blame, shame, hopelessness, lack of confidence, and resignation.

Emotional reactions perceived by respondents varied by age and educational attainments. Age is the most significant factor, which affects the unemployed on their emotional feelings. Fifteen respondents out of 19, each over 40, reported more than five negative feelings they perceived in the face of their

unemployment, while five other respondents each under 40, reported less than four kinds of negative feelings. By education, respondents with less than a high school education were more likely to feel negative emotions than respondents with more than a high school education. The combination of age and education is one of the important predictors for the degree of emotional reactions. For example, a 42-year-old respondent with an elementary education described his feelings in terms of ten different emotional reactions, and a 55-year-old man with a middle school education reported nine emotional reactions.

Early Stage: shock, emptiness, frustration, and being betrayed

The feelings the unemployed perceived were a sense of emptiness, shock, frustration, and being betrayed in the early stage of their unemployment. However, their emotional feelings about themselves and their unemployment status vary by individuals' situations, such as the availability of social networks and resources, and by their socioeconomic status. The older and less educated, the more they were vulnerable to the psychosocial symptoms. Age is an important factor because there is severe age discrimination in the labor market in South Korea. Three respondents who lost their jobs due to the early retirement experienced severe restrictions on reemployment in their old careers. This sample includes 12 respondents aged over 45 who expressed that they gave up their reemployment and looked for secondary jobs such as an apartment night watcher, construction worker, and janitor.

At the same time, reasons for being unemployed were significant for the unemployed to feel these emotions. For example, those unemployed due to business failure were the most vulnerable group to negative feelings because not only did they lose their jobs but also they had huge debts and bad credits. This group experienced more family disruptions and had more barriers to being reemployed than other unemployed individuals who lost their jobs due to layoffs. In the case of Kim, a 32-year-old man with a high school education, everything was so complicated to him at the moment of unemployment that he felt a sense of emptiness for a short time. He added also that he could not see anything but his daughter growing.

Shock

Four respondents stated their experiences in feeling shock about their unemployment. These respondents were laid off and had worked more than eight years in the companies. Those companies were directly affected by the economic crisis of 1997, closed in 1998 or ended up with a changed ownership. A respondent who had worked for his company for 25 years mentioned his feeling of shock:

15-4: I was shocked when I heard about my company bankruptcy and later closed. Although the company had been very stable, we could feel a little signs of financial problems right before the bankruptcy. We could not receive our pay and could see other problems related to finance. Even so, it was shock.

Sense of Emptiness

A sense of emptiness was reported by three respondents whose educational attainments were less than high school. One respondent aged 42 grew

up in a foster care center because his father did not approve him as a son. His resignation from his restaurant job accelerated the feeling of emptiness originally derived from lack of family support and his perception of being deserted from his father. Another respondent aged 32, with a high school education, noted:

1-3: We had some savings, not much, but as less as we could buy only some rice. Umm. It was short but I lost self-confidence. Everything was very complicated to me and I felt a sense of emptiness for a short time. For a couple of months, I could not see anything but my daughter was getting growing.

High competition between workers in the labor market affected relations with coworkers. Under these circumstances, the unemployed suffered from both losing friendships and jobs. As a result, the unemployed tended to feel emptiness.

3-5: They did not allow me to work with them as a team member. This economic situation made them change. I felt so empty and was like collapsed. Those were very close friends. We'd been together all the time.

Frustration and Anger

Feeling frustrated was described by seven respondents. Four of them had lower education attainment and were over 40 years of age, and the other three were college educated and were between 30 and 50. Although their situation frustrated them, the younger and more educated unemployed seemed to regard their terrible situation as a learning process for better future. A 39 year-old with a college education spoke:

12-2: I was miserable and frustrated with the situation in which I could not get a job in my young age. But I am so optimistic enough to think that this kind of difficulty would be a good experience for me to learn how to deal with future problems that may come to me.

Blame others/Feeling betrayed

The circumstances of a hostile labor market accelerate competition among workers and job insecurity even for the employed. Sharing employment information with others could cost one the opportunity to acquire a job. One of the important Korean traditional virtues, *Insim* -- a social norm referring that people close to each other, including their neighbors, should share good things such as delicious food, house tools, and valuable information -- is shrinking in such harsh economic conditions. A feeling of being betrayed among respondents reflects a negative impact of unemployment on depleting social resources and mutual help.

A respondent who had worked as a construction worker for more than 20 years said:

3-5: I felt betrayed by my coworkers who did not offer work. I trusted them so much.

Another respondent who left home after his business failure felt betrayed by his close friends whom he helped in the past.

11-4: I do not seem to have close friends. I helped them a lot before, but I hate to ask them to help me. Others differ from me. They seem to feel burdened with meeting me because they have to spend money even on having a cup of coffee for me. There is a friend who turns to an opposite direction when he sees me. Due to feeling sad about that, I rather avoid them. I do not give them a burden. They got my help a lot before. I think they do not understand me. They seem to think I am o.k. and do not know where I live. I'd never let them know where to live. It's shameful.

Another problem in relations between friends that has been caused by job loss was described as follows:

12-3: I have problems with one of my friend who worked with us. I hope he could understand my situation; instead, he ignores me in front of others saying that we (I and my brother) did not eat anything for two days. I was so displeased by his remark of why we do not go back home. I think he is making a mistake.

Prolonged Stage – self-blame, shame, hopelessness, lack of confidence, and resignation

The prolonged stage of unemployment is associated with the feelings perceived by respondents as self-blame, shame, hopelessness, lack of confidence, and resignation. In this stage, they involve various negative experiences related to their job loss. Their failure in acquiring new jobs and their experiences in engaging in odd jobs influenced negative feelings among respondents. As addressed earlier, the sort of feelings perceived by respondents depends on their education, age, and available resources.

Self-Blame

Self-concept in Korea is related to the ego's various interpersonal and group relationships, such as family, friends, country, and other factors. Furthermore, self-concept among Koreans includes ancestors, nature, and the cosmos in relation to natural and supernatural power based on Korean and Far East Asian philosophical and religious backgrounds (Pang 2000: 28). Baik (1984: 283-286) termed the self-concept of Koreans as "all-inclusive self." This self-concept orientation tends to foster obedience, self-sacrifice for group goals and group harmony. Yielding and sacrificing for others, rather than self-realization,

are considered primary virtues. Thus, in general, Koreans tend to hold a great amount of self-blame.

Feelings of self-blame about being unemployed were great among respondents in this study. Almost every respondent expressed their feeling of self-blame, especially about being unemployed. This emotional reaction to their unemployment was displayed by all individuals with lower levels of educational attainment, from middle-school to junior-college educations, except for some respondent with a college dropout. Three out of five respondents out of work due to business failure had a very high level of self-blame. Thus, the feeling of self-blame seems to be related to both educational attainment and reasons for being unemployed, particularly business failure.

One of distinct features in these emotional reactions to their unemployment was the emotional transition, from feeling betrayed and blaming others for their job loss to the feeling of self-blame. Usually individuals with lower socioeconomic status were more likely to blame themselves than those with a higher socioeconomic status. At the same time, the unemployed with a higher socioeconomic status whose business had failed, and who experienced family disruption, tended to blame themselves at a greater level. Two respondents over 60 years of age who experienced business failures mentioned the feeling of self-blame. These two people experienced family disruption, such as divorce right after their bankruptcy and lived alone in a homeless shelter or a local inn.

2-10: I began to think that I collected seeds I sowed. At first, I felt I was mistreated. I asked myself why I happened to come here. I regretted others and a fate in which I could not see. I could not blame others

because I made this. It was my fault not to be able to stand straight. It was me who damaged others. I could not blame others.

3-8: I take the blame upon myself, not upon the society. It was me who did not listen to my parents who said that I should have got a job in a company.

11-10: I hear fake sound and wish to die. I eat not for taste but for being alive. I burst into anger and tears often and am dominated by regret and self-blame. I feel always stuffed with the failure of what I am trying to do. I have a deep sense of inferiority about myself. I wished my children found and understood me but they did not. I was hurt and depressed, but avoided blaming my children because I am responsible for my family disruption.

Shame

A relatively longer unemployment experience is associated with material hardships and chances to engage in odd jobs. During their odd jobs, the unemployed tend to feel high levels of shame. Nine respondents described their experiences in feeling shamefulness during their public-work involvement and staying at a homeless shelter. Receiving public assistance, help from friends, and staying at homeless shelters were the main factors that make respondents feel shame, particularly when their friends or families found them doing odd jobs or sleeping at streets. However, at the same time, the public workers are becoming used to work and thus feel less depressed.

2-4: To live, I had to collect trash. So I went around streets. It caused me to meet people whom I knew a long time ago. Those people asked me why I was living like this and what happened to me. I put my brothers and sisters in a desperate situation because I asked them to cosign for me. After my failure in my business, I could not pay them back. So, I did not get touch with them for a long time. I felt contempt when I was found by my relatives and friends while cleaning streets with elderly women on the street. It was so shameful. I met those whom I taught and who worked for me in my company. In the situation, I had no feelings of frustration, but

felt like my brain was empty. Sometimes I wondered if I was still alive. It is almost like I am not living. Then I appreciate it because I am still alive. Very often I wanted to die and made suicide plans such as drowning in the Han River with my daughter while driving.

3-6: While cleaning up on the street, I encountered a friend of mine. My self-respect was hurt. I told him that I had something to do in the village office. Later, I met another friend, too, while working on the street. The friend asked me that what I was doing there. I said honestly that I lost my job and should do this for living. And he asked me to meet after work, but I did not go.

5-1: Working as a public worker is shameful. I worry about coming across my neighbors anytime, but it is only a way to live. I think no working is much more shameful.

11-4: I lose self-respect when my friends gave me some money. I do not go to get together with my friends because I feel shameful and desperate. My social life is shrunken. I avoid coming across my friends by chance.

12-3: My twin brother and I had stayed in inns or sauna centers. It was too expensive to stay there. At the same time, we could not find a job, resulting in sleeping in the station. One day I met in the station restroom by accident a friend of mine who informed me of this homeless shelter. The friend bought me breakfast. I was so ashamed of myself.

Hopelessness

An unemployment status can be interpreted very differently from different people. Older, unemployed people without savings and assets felt hopeless.

10-7: I felt so hopeless that I lost my will to live and attempt to succeed. I despaired that I should live for myself, not for my children who maintain good lives without me or any other people. My past life was worthless but I have only one life. Then I began to think that I want to live to help others, to travel wherever I wanted to go, to eat whatever I wanted to have, and to meet a woman. I recovered my self-confidence and said to myself, "I can do it." I will find a job in this coming spring. I strongly desire to meet a friend, a spouse, or an old woman who could talk with me and provide the courage of our life. It is too cold to do that now.

Feeling Loneliness

Unemployment reduces and narrows one's social involvement. Older respondents without families felt great loneliness. Their unemployment situation makes it impossible for them to meet with their families and to recover their broken relationships with those close to them due to the effect of unemployment. The material hardship they have prevents social contacts and family reunions. Respondents who lost families in the course of losing their jobs felt higher levels of loneliness. It was very severe for older respondents living in homeless shelters. An older respondent living in a homeless shelter desperately sought a person who could talk with them.

7-9: I wish I had a person I could talk about anything with. I am the oldest son of four siblings. I cannot talk about my feelings to my parents and my siblings because I do not want them to worry about me. I am disposed to give help first and then get help from others.

Anxiety and Fear

Anxiety about their future and children was frequently mentioned. Koreans' strong emphasis on education led the unemployed to be worried about their children. For them, children are their hope. The concern about children's education was great among middle-class respondents who usually think that getting a good education would be the most important path to upward social mobility. The fact that Korean parents spend a great amount of money on extra education besides the school education enhances the concern on educational expenses. However, lower-class respondents were likely to worry about basic livings and shortage of necessities rather than a child's education.

In addition, the experience of repeated failures in job-seeking leads to high levels of anxiety about their future.

13-3: The most concern is that my children's education requires so much money. The fear related to education for my children is great. They are all in their school ages. It is extremely difficult for me to forget worries and fears about my future. That's why I drink. The most difficult thing is of the economic problem. I avoid going to the doctor because I am afraid of any chance that I would have a chronic disease. If I have such a disease, how can I raise my children? I have not got health checkups for three years. The last time I got was at work.

14-6: My biggest concern is of what I should do in the future. I have a plan to do something but my lack of experience as an owner makes me feel frustrated. It is very difficult to change from pessimistic to optimistic thought. I am quite irresolute in making a decision.

15-2: The sense of fear is getting deeper with the fact that it is impossible to get a new job in this economy. It is also a big risk to open my own business. I have rarely seen those who succeed in their business recently. Many of them lost their invested capital. My age of 50 makes it difficult for me to do something new.

Guilty

The unemployed felt guilty when their family members and friends are hurt financially and emotionally because of their job loss. It includes the cases of the business failure, which made people in their networks harder economically for the reason that they borrowed money or asked for cosigning for their bank loans.

2-7: I cannot ask for help from my siblings who had financial losses because of my business failure. I borrowed money from them and asked them to cosign for my bank loans. When I did my business, I also asked my friends to cosign for me, and they were bankrupt. I got divorced because of my failure in my business. Due to the failure, I got myocardial infraction. I had hidden myself from people for about two years and later found that I could not speak very well. Since I had not met people for a long time, I forgot how to speak.

The feeling of guilty also was associated with unmet family expectations to the unemployed as a son and father. A 29-year-old respondent with a college education who had never had jobs after college graduation said:

4-15: Actually I was not so bad with the failure with getting a job. I do not want to make much money. I also hate to be in one of bureaucracies operated by hierarchies. So, I want to be self-employed with selling computers. My parents know that I am eagerly looking for a job. I feel guilty about it, though.

Lack of Self-Confidence

The prolonged unemployment status involves repeated failure in job-seeking, which leads to lower levels of self-confidence among the unemployed. A respondent graduated from a college in 1998, just as numerous companies stopped hiring new employees at the entry level due to the economic crisis, and thus he lost his self-confidence with endless job-searching.

4-2: I meet my friends I had known in my college very often. We get all together once in two months but some of them meet twice a month. I do not talk about my personal matters but ask them if other friends are o.k. or not. I have about three friends whom I could talk about my personal matters honestly. But I've never met them on the purpose of talking about my problems. They understand me by talking about other things. I sometimes ask them if there is a job available for me. But though they informed me of jobs several times, I have not tried to get the jobs due to loss of self-confidence. I do not really attempted to get a job so far. Well, I feel so tired of doing so.

Resignation

The last stage that the unemployed enter is the level of resignation where they accept their unemployment situation as a reality, do not feel betrayed and angry about the society and other people around them, and, at the same time, do not hold many plans and dreams of the future. They try to live as taken for

granted. Entering this stage takes more than two years of unemployment periods. Ten respondents show the state of resignation. However, the respondents' feeling of resignation associated with varied by their age and duration of unemployment. Older unemployed individuals are more likely to have positive types of resignation than younger ones. A longer duration is associated with a higher level of resignation than a shorter duration. They tend to give up many kinds of material desires and accept their situations as a destiny.

The types of positive resignation are cases that the unemployed decline some of their dreams about their jobs and levels of salary. This positive resignation can be acquired when the unemployed learn more about the reality of the labor market through prolonged periods of job-searching. Their experience of repeated rejections from recruiters and understanding the level of salaries and wages according to the person's educational level, job experiences, and age made it possible for them to accept the reality and to reject any of unrealistic views about their future jobs. Among those who entered the stage of resignation, some of them might give up unrealistic hopes, but they still have some hopes and wait for some time in which they can be ready to change their life and achieve their plans, such as opening a small store and writing a book, while others lose even realistic plans for their future.

3-4: I used to explode with anger when people touched my nerve. But I am not like that anymore. Rather, I keep patient. I give up much.

2-13: It was so hard to deal with material difficulties and a sense of shame. I did not have anyone who can help me when I was in physical pain and could not eat anything because of no money. I thought that it was my fault, not anyone's but mine. Eventually I've come here due to my fault. Everything happened because of my fate. It is my destiny. I justified my

situation and gave up my career. As the time went, I obtained wisdom of abandonment. Now I became comfortable.

4-18: After my involvement in political activities at college, I became aloof about society. I tend to complain a lot. Now, I have no hope, no ambition for making much money, but just living modestly. I am not anxious about making money and do not want to have much.

23:6: I feel that I am lucky if I have a job, and if not, it is natural. I am changed. I regretted a lot in the past about quitting a job and rejecting a job offer.

24-11: I am not satisfied with my life but excited because we try not to be eaten by big fishes if it is supposed that we are small fishes in a fish ball. Small fishes will become healthier because they swim actively not to be eaten by the big fishes. I think that pain would be a sort of lubricating oil that shines our lives.

3.3 BEHAVIORAL REACTIONS

Unemployment leads to a variety of behavioral changes caused by their limited social interactions and bad economic conditions. Emotional symptoms also accompany behavioral changes, which reflect their suffering from the unexpected negative event. Three typical behavioral reactions to their unemployment were related to 1) suicide attempts, 2) avoidance of social activities, and 3) engaging in habits detrimental to their health. Some people have gone through these behavioral changes for a longer time, while others cope with them very quickly, depending on social support and resources available to them. Those who could not deal with these behavioral patterns successfully tended to show an inability to get full-time jobs, which require regular life styles and normal interactions with others. The experience of long-term unemployment frequently results in the maladjustment of normal social life and marginalization

of social positions among the unemployed. Prolonged unemployment and repeated rejection by prospective employers reportedly resulted in a loss of endurance and patience. Staying at home and having too much free time affected their adjustment with the liberal lives rather than challenging hard working lives. Working part time and having freer time make them impatient with regular jobs and with new relationships they should make in the workplaces. Although they seek to have a job longer, they express their concerns about working regular hours and being sociable and patient about any possible conflict with other workers in the workplaces. In other words, long-term unemployment leads to decreased social skills and adaptability to a new environment.

A total of six respondents reported that they attempted and planned suicide due to their unemployment. Suicide attempts and suicidal thoughts are related to business failure on one hand and to the degree of social interactions with others on other hand. Business failure leads to a desperate situation, which depletes almost any of resources and relationships the person possessed. The fact that three of those who attempted suicide experienced business failure and divorce indicates that the interaction of the two factors is significant in affecting a suicidal impulse. However, it appears that the older unemployed from the lower class are more likely to consider suicide than the younger and older from the middle class. In addition, one respondent unemployed from layoff who attempted suicide had a strong attachment to his job. After losing the job, he thought that he lost everything. For him, the job was not only a source of material earnings but also a

source of self-pride and self-identity through a variety of interactions with coworkers.

The second typical behavioral reaction shown by the unemployed was to avoid social activities. They do not try to get together with their relatives and friends because of both economic reasons and shame. Seven respondents said they could not afford to socialize. Their bad habits can be categorized as drinking, smoking, playing computer games, sleeplessness and loss of appetite. A total of twelve respondents experienced increases in alcohol intakes, and three respondents increased smoking. Three younger respondents in their 20s engaged in playing computer games for days without sleeping at all. While playing the games, they could forget their miserable situation and fear about their future. Five respondents had problems with sleeping, and four respondents lost their appetite, eating only to be alive. All their changed behaviors along with their negative emotional reactions are detrimental to their health

Spending Days

One of interesting findings from the interview with the unemployed was that few respondents spent their time at home. Many of them go out at a regular time in the morning and come back home at a very similar time everyday. Although in the early period of their unemployment, many of them are likely to avoid going out and to stay home all day, as time goes by, they begin to feel uneasiness with being at home all day. The main reason that they go out everyday is that they want to avoid any possible conflicts and fights caused by someone's

nagging in their family. To spend a day, the unemployed tended to go out to public places such as parks, college campuses, and social clubs where they would meet other unemployed people who can talk with them and exchange job information. The avoidance of encountering with their family members during the daytime plays important roles in maintaining normal relationships with them.

A respondent from the middle class, who experienced some conflicts with his wife while at home after his early retirement from a government-funded tobacco company, went out routinely to public places everyday. It was possible for him to spend his days out of home because he had some material resources, which could be spent on lunch and entertainment. He talked:

21-4: I stayed at the park, going around all the parks near home. I could meet those who could chat with me. There are many people who come daily. I had some amounts of pension I received every month, and my wife did not know about that. I also had got unemployment insurance benefits for four months. It was a little less than my salary. I spend about 30,000 to 35,000 won a day. I come back home at 7 pm, which is one hour earlier than the time I was back from work. I eat dinner at home. I sometimes go to the place where I can play an oriental chess with people. I cannot go there everyday because I cannot afford to pay for the game. We play for lunch. I have played chess games for 20 years. I used to go there twice a week after work when I had a job. Sometimes, I also go fishing to the Han River. I should pay for a fishing place, which costs 1,000 won for all day, but you have to buy bites at 10,000 won. I go fishing three or four times a month.

He added that it was inevitable for him to go out of home during the daytime due to his wife's nagging about economic hardship and their future. His available material resources, such as pensions and unemployment insurance benefits, made it possible for him to have continuous relationships with his close friends. The respondent did not necessarily avoid meeting his friends.

A younger respondent, aged 36, goes around all day, except for breakfast and dinner times, near his house to avoid possible conflicts with his mother and brother, who complain about his inactive job-search efforts. He commented:

22-2 I wake up at 4 am and take a walk for a while. I take a walk to a university campus near my house and drink a cup of coffee. And I have breakfast at home and go back to the campus again for taking a walk or for staying at the library. Then I go to the computer center to search for a job over the internet. I eat lunch out of home. I spend on lunch between about 2,000 and 1,500 won. The restaurant I go offers great side dishes. I don't like to eat at home. Usually I lose my appetite because of a bad taste of a meal my mother makes, but I eat dinner at home. My mother does not make many side dishes. After dinner, I go out again and come back home very late. I go to bed at 1 am.

His anxiety about unemployment and conflict with his family members led him to have severe levels of insomnia. His unwillingness to have meals with his family members is also related to his wish to avoid fights with them.

Suicide Attempts

Sainbury (1955) reports that in America and Britain various studies found negative correlations between suicide rates and business conditions. His own analysis of the Registrar General's annual statistics showed there to be a rise in suicide during the depression of 1930-32. A more recent study by Sathyvathi (1977) of the relationship between unemployment and suicide in Bangalore found that of the 171 cases of unemployed suicides between 1967 and 73, 65 percent had committed suicide either because of unemployment as the only reason or for reasons in addition to unemployment.

Statistical analyses on suicide show significant increases in suicide rates right after the crisis in South Korea; for example, the number of suicide related to

the drowning into Han River, a symbol of remarkable economic growth in South Korea located in the middle of the capital city, Seoul, was fifty-six cases in May 1998, which increased by 50 percent higher than the number of cases during the same month of the previous year. The total suicide rates in the first quarter of 1998 increased by 36 percent relative to those of the previous year.

It is surprising that three of thirty-one respondents attempted suicide, and other three respondents had suicide plans and thoughts because of their unemployment and business failure. The suicide cases in this study show the relationship between suicide attempts and reasons for being unemployed, particularly job loss from business failure or layoff. A suicide attempter aged 65, living in a homeless shelter, failed in his business, first several times by fires previously and then by the economic crisis in 1999. The previous business failure affected his family disruption including a divorce. He lost all his properties and savings from the 1999 business failure and stayed with his married son. He was not comfortable with staying with his daughter-in-law, and suffered from feeling lonely. One day, he went to a park and drank poison with alcohol. He said:

10-1: I lost my house and factory, everything I had. I wanted to go to my brother in Japan with another brother living in Pusan. But my brother in Pusan was too bad physically to go to Japan with me. Instead of going to Japan, I had lived with my son and daughter-in-law for two months, but I did not feel very comfortable with them. I felt that they had a burden and difficulty due to me. One day I went out my son's house and went to a park. I committed suicide by drinking alcohol with a poison in September 2000. I wanted to die alone. When I woke up, I was in a hospital. I had been treated there for a month and asked them to send me here to House of Freedom (a homeless shelter).

Another respondent, aged 55, who also attempted suicide, had a layoff from his company, a department store, which was bankrupt in 1998. He was proud of his job, a security guard in the department store, and satisfied with good pay and benefits. Suddenly, he was told from his boss that he was laid off with other 25 workers in his office. The company laid off older workers, replacing the position with newly hired younger ones. He did not have much savings and assets because he enjoyed a variety of social activities such as dancing and fishing with his friends and coworkers. His age of 50 was not favorable in the labor market. His self-respect and confidence were hurt. He started to collect sleeping pills and one day took the pills with alcohol at home, leaving a letter to his wife. He was found by his wife and sent to hospital. The unexpected job loss and repeated failures in job-seeking are related to his suicide attempts. In particular, his high level of involvement in his previous job had a significant effect on the suicide attempt after losing that position.

Another case shows that one could commit suicide when they are lonely without family and cannot achieve what they want.

11-2: I had much of suicidal impulses and have the same feeling now. Actually, I tried to take poison after the economic crisis because I was too lonely to live, and missed my family so much. I was stressed with my state that I could not do what I wanted to.

Among the younger unemployed from the lower class, some of them had suicidal thoughts during the period of emotional suffering from a sudden job loss and failure in job-seeking activities.

23-6: Three years ago, I stayed home and had nothing to do for two months. Entering the third month of unemployment, I watched TV and read nobles all day, not going out at all. I hated to go out. If being out of

home, I felt guilty and ashamed and aching with my legs. After 15 to 16 days passed, I started thinking of some of the ways that I could kill myself without feeling a pain. I went to a store to buy a poison, but the worker in the store did not give it to me. I thought being alive was useless and worthless. Then I forgot about killing myself when I got a job at the bureau of promoting small and medium sized companies. I think that I was very stupid. On a TV show, I learned about euthanasia. I wondered how much it costs to get euthanasia. I drank heavily about 4 bottles of Soju a day. Watching TV all day and reading nobles checked out from the library, and watching TV again, then drinking until 2 to 3 o'clock in the morning and getting up at 9. I drank usually at night while other family members were sleeping.

Avoiding Social Activities

Numerous studies have explored that one of the typical behaviors changed because of job-loss among the unemployed is cutting off their social activities. Nine respondents said that they tend to avoid social involvements. Most of the respondents who reported their limited social involvement due to their unemployment tend to be less educated and too materially deprived to be involved in such social activities. College educated people in this study tended to participate actively in social activities while less than high school educated people addressed that they reduced to see people.

After losing his doll business, a 42-year-old respondent living with a daughter began to avoid meeting with his extended families and friends who lent money to him.

2-9: I hated to see people and to make my head up. I've never spoken to people for two years, and then felt that my brain became rustic. Naturally we became isolated from each other because we became so busy. It became so difficult to see each other even once or twice. Those who came to see me felt sorry about me at the first meeting, but then began to feel that it is a burden to see me. Simply it is so painful to see each other. Then our relationships became so distant.

Another respondent spoke of his loss of motivation to meet friends:

4-17: I am too lazy to call my friends. I only meet them when they call me. I am disposed not to get in touch with friends, relatives and other people. It is annoying me. I am comfortable when I stay home. I avoid getting phone calls from my parents because they always ask me about my jobs. Most time, I forget about my employment but my parents remind me of that. After talking with them I do not feel very comfortable.

A respondent reveals his bad feelings about those who have jobs or much money. He avoid meeting with his friends because of the feeling of shame about his unemployment. He recovered from his suicide attempt. He commented:

5-1: I do not meet my friends anymore because they have their jobs. I cannot accept my situation, yet. It is ashamed to see them. I only meet those who work as public workers now. My friends pretend to worry about me, but I do not believe them. I used to dance in nightclubs with my friends who lived in rich communities. I stopped dancing after my unemployment because I am ashamed. Every weekend I used to go fishing. I also loved to play table tennis and to hike, but I don't do those anymore. I dislike going out for a fun. I cannot afford to have social gatherings. Entertainment will be fun only if you are fine. Instead, I watch TV on weekends. I have no money to go out and hate to see how other people live well. My wife goes to her sister's house very often and I used to go there very often, too. But I have not gone to the house for four months. I hate to see how well they live. I try not to think of like this, but it is so hard to control my mind.

Some of young respondents addressed that they had stopped their voluntary work at community organizations since their job-loss. One respondent talked:

12-4: I worked as a volunteer in the House of Angel, a facility for children with disabilities. I cannot do that anymore.

Engaging in Bad Habits

Drinking and Smoking

Drinking and smoking were typical stress relief methods to the unemployed. 28 respondents out of 32 experienced increases in drinking and three in smoking. The most popular alcohol among people in South Korea is “*Soju*,” a traditional Korean alcohol with 24 degrees, because it is relatively cheap (about 60 cents) and easy to get in any retail stores. Some of them mentioned that they drank heavily right after their unemployment and later tended to reduce the alcohol consumption due to health problems. Some of them had to quit drinking because they live in homeless shelters, where residents are not allowed to drink inside the shelter. There was a different drinking pattern between the less educated and more educated. The less educated tended to drink alone to comfort themselves, while the higher educated tend to drink with other people for socializing. A drinking pattern for the lower educated unemployed calls *Whatsul*, meaning that one drinks usually alone and heavily without food when he or she is angry. This kind of drinking is to appease their temper and resentment caused from negative life events rather than drinking for socializing with others.

For the homeless unemployed, the drinking functions differently as for warming their bodies, whose work usually takes place outdoors during winter. The unemployed answered the question on why they drink in three ways: to forget their bad feelings and negative experiences, to sleep at night, and to spend boring

days. The unemployed perceived that drinking would be helpful in lowering their anger and despair.

5-1: I drink not to shake my mind. While drinking, if someone talks to me badly, I feel like I want to kill or hit the person. I do not want to listen to someone who boasts about what the person possesses.

7-7: At first, I heard the news of the company's closing, I could not think at all. Then, I tried to make it simple to deal with the problem. With the about 80 percent of resolutions related to issues on the company, now my biggest concern is what I have to do for myself. In the inception of the problem, the main purpose was to how to solve the problem for all the union members. I had drunk much for six days a week except on Sunday. Without drinking I could not sleep for two years. I drink a bottle a day, which was reduced from 2-3 bottles a day.

13-5: I drank more after the job loss because I had more time to drink. I do not like to smoke much. Just smoke a pack a month. My smoking habit did not change much due to my job loss.

23-6: I drank heavily about four bottles of *Soju* a day. Watching TV all day and reading nobles checked out from the library, and watching TV again, then drinking until 2 to 3 o'clock in the morning and getting up at 9. I drank usually at night while other family members were sleeping.

24-4: Other types of symptoms that I had were being anti-social, avoiding going out and drinking a lot, a bottle of *Soju* everyday. I did not like drinking but started drinking. I drank as a habit because it helps me relaxed. Drinking also helped me sleep.

Three respondents increased smoking and two of them began to smoke again because of the stress derived from job loss after quitting for seven years.

14-6: I smoke a pack a day and have smoked again since starting to work as a union worker after quitting for about seven years. Pressure and stress caused by the interaction with members and the company representatives led me to smoke a lot.

15-3: I do not feel any changes in my health. I smoke a pack. After quitting smoking for seven years, I resumed smoking right before the economic crisis.

Besides such increased habits, two younger unemployed aged 28 and 29 reported that they played computer games every day to forget anxiety and frustration resulted from their unemployment. One of these two played computer games for days without sleeping at all.

12-4: I had played computer games after losing my job. Sometimes I play computer games continuously for days, without sleeping at all. I think playing computer games is good to spend times if not addicted. I often do computer chatting with my brother or unknown people. They told me that they were comfortable with revealing their thoughts honestly. I tend to give them advice.

Sleeping Problems

Younger respondents are more likely to suffer from sleeping problems than older respondents.

13-3: For many days, I cannot sleep at all due to worries about the future.

2-32: I sleep for 2-3 hours a day. Sometimes, my anxiety prevents me from sleeping. I have not slept much since last year.

In sum, this section investigated characteristics of behavioral reactions that the unemployed described. There was an association between socioeconomic status and the degree of the behavioral changes as a result of job loss. The unemployed the lower class and with less education more than those from the middle class and more education were more likely to engage in the negative behaviors. In particular, the case of suicide attempts was strongly related to the reason for unemployment and to the degree of the person's attachment to his previous work. The unemployed who lost their jobs due to business failure affected high rates of suicide attempts and more need for changes in behaviors. In addition, those who

had strong attachment to and satisfaction with their previous work also experienced negative changes in behaviors and habits.

CHAPTER 4. UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE FAMILY

Chapter 4 examines what the unemployed and their family members experience after their job loss. The most widely investigated problems among the unemployed in their family are material deprivation and family disruption due to one member's unemployment, which lasts longer than the family members can deal with. In this chapter, the characteristics of material deprivation and relation problems with spouses among unemployed men in South Korea are investigated.

The form of family is strongly embedded to social structure and social traditions. A concept of the family is defined somewhat differently in an Asian world than in the West, where a unit of family is often considered to be a nuclear family rather than an extended family. Despite a rapid change in the family structure from extended to nuclear family, many of married Korean couples live with their parents and unmarried adult siblings as well as their children. It is also very rare that unmarried adult children live independently of their parents, except for those who have a job far away from their home. For these reasons, the concept of family used here includes both nuclear and extended families.

The first issue related to unemployment and the family might be the question of how an existence of the family affects an overall level of well-being of the unemployed. One of functions of the family as a source of emotional support, which might mediate negative consequences of unemployment, is found to be very crucial for well-being of the unemployed. As discussed above, among those who attempted suicide, two respondents experienced family disruption and

thus a detachment from their family members. A sense of responsibility as well as emotional support that the unemployed perceive also play an important role in keeping, if not enhancing, their self-esteem and self-identity, which are closely associated with their relationship with other people. Thus, it is clear that frequent interactions with family members and emotional support from family members again as perceived by the unemployed, would help control more effectively their psychosocial symptoms, including suicidal attempts.

The next question raised in this chapter is what would happen to the family after the family's main wage earner loses his or her job. The first possible consequence could be material deprivation. If an unemployed person finds a job successfully right after their job loss or after a short unemployment period -- during which he is still eligible for any types of welfare benefits including pensions and unemployment insurance benefits¹⁸-- the problem of material hardship might affect less adversely the well-being of the family. However, this option seems highly unlikely in a situation where the unemployed lose their jobs due to structural economic changes so that the condition of the competitive labor market drastically narrows the chance of reemployment. The nature of the sample collected in the present study which includes the unemployed out of work for more than six months, also eliminates the option that they are supported by unemployment insurance benefits, although some of them have the chance to get the opportunity of public work which pays them a little amount of money ranging

¹⁸ Unemployment insurance benefits in Korea can be paid for a maximum of three months from the date when the unemployed are laid off.

from US\$ 250 to US\$500.¹⁹ Therefore, the problem of material hardship was the most frequently cited by the respondents, and other problems such as family disruption and runaway youth, mentioned by the respondents, tended to be products of the material hardship. Another aspect of the problem that the unemployed frequently experienced was relations of the unemployed with their spouse, children, and close friends. Many of respondents reported that they cut off the relationships with others because of social disgrace and despair derived from their unemployment status. In term of broken relationships in the family, this paper specifically focuses on an underlying mechanism of the relationship between husband and wife, applying a spatial theory.

The last aspect explored in this chapter involves the question of how the unemployed deal with their family problems. Despite the nature of variations according to different family situations among the unemployed, some of them successfully cope with family problems caused by their unemployment. Perceived social supports and resources by the unemployed tend to help them deal with the problems. Those who had a secure job and higher educational level before the current job-loss were more likely to cope with the family problems than those who had an irregular job and lower educational level. Also, material resources including savings and properties played an important role in developing survival strategies.

¹⁹ In the urban area to live in Korea, each household based on four family members needs at least US\$ 1,000.

4.1 EXISTENCE OF THE FAMILY

The family can be the best thing in the world or it can be the worst. This commonly recognized truth is born out in the matter of unemployment. The family can consolidate its strength and the intelligence as its disposal and find a job for other family members a given person is unemployed. It can provide its members with the confidence required for finding employment. Conversely, it can accumulate its members' disadvantages and pass them on to the following generation -- low educational and vocational achievement, social isolation, inadequate initiation in making the most of one's assets, and residing in a locality where the effects of the recession are particularly marked (Benoit – Guilbot 1994: 63).

A Marriage as a Prestigious Status for People from the Lower Class

For those from the lower class, a marriage can be prestigious because it requires secure jobs and a moderate amount of savings for wedding expenses and places to live, which are usually supported by parents and older siblings in the case of middle-class and upper-class unmarried men in Korea. A typical man with a lower level of educational attainment, one who has been at work and out of work unpredictably and has poor parents, has lower chances to get married than the person with a higher level of education and from a rich parents. At the same time, the person's poor family background becomes a barrier to get married if he should support materially his parents after marriage because his prospective wife would not be willing to help his poor parents and siblings. For such a case, creating a family through a marriage will be prestigious for individuals from the

lower class. A 36-year-old respondent with a high school education addresses that material hardship is the main reason for him not to get married and finally leads him to giving up his prospective marriage.

27-13: Money did matter for not being married yet. I don't want to make a woman unhappy and to give her a burden. In fact, I regret not getting married. As a human being, I feel lonely. But it is okay. I read books and watch television while being alone. It is impossible to be happy for 24 hours a day, but I was not frustrated or unhappy as often.

Another respondent, aged 54, addresses how his material difficulty affects the relationship with his girlfriend and leads him to give up on marriage with her.

3-10: I meet her sometimes, not often. I do not know where she lives. I call her or she does to meet with me. We do not have a meal together, just having a cup of coffee on the street. Both of us are poor; thus we talk not about the lives we had got through, but about the lives we will get in the future. Both of us know that we cannot afford to get married.

Sixteen out of thirty two respondents in this study were married, including two people separated from their wives at the time of interview. Among fourteen married respondents, seven men had more than a two years of college, while the other five respondents had a high school education. Their previous occupations were engineers, managers, technicians in big firms and businessmen, which also indicates that a marriage is closely related to higher social class and a high level of material possession. On the other hand, a maintenance of marriage requires the person to have a relatively stable social status because failure in keeping the status for a long time also harms their continuation of marriage and of living with their own family members. A total of four divorced men in this study reported that their marriage went wrong due to their unemployment or failure in business. Although some of those who had similar experiences did not extend their

misfortune to divorce, it appears to say that insecure jobs and its impact on material hardship adversely affect a relationship between husband and wife.

A Family as a Stressful Relation

Despite the assumption that the existence of a family is beneficial for everybody's well-being, it is not necessarily true that the family always provides advantageous benefits to its members. Some of family relationships might be so problematic that the family member may feel extremely stressful to deal with everyone else in the family. According to Keniston (1984: 279),²⁰ one flaw in the traditional approach toward families and children has been to concentrate too exclusively on the provision of services, some of which are a way of undoing the damage done by an economic system that fails to provide millions of families with jobs, a decent income, and work that can be combined, without undue conflict, with parenting. Usually poor families tend to give a lot of burden on taking care of economically unable parents to their adult children who should delay their life goals and marriage to fulfill the duties assigned by the family. A son of a single mother in the present study who had several life crises had shown severe psychological symptoms, which became much more serious during his unemployment.

It would be a well-known factor that the family could provide material and emotional support to its family members. Material support provided by family members to the unemployed can include family members assuring responsibility

²⁰ The author also goes on to say that in the end, no proposal to extend services can be adequate unless it is accompanied by economic supports for families (Keniston 1984: 279).

of material support to the family by finding jobs when other members lose jobs. Having this situation, however, requires a structural or external condition, in which there are a moderate number of jobs available to other family members, whose qualifications should meet with those required by the employers in the labor market. Meeting the condition would be unrealistic, given the bad economic crisis in Korea forces, where thousands of women and adult children come out to the labor market with only a few positions available. Another reason would be that most of women staying home for many years do not tend to hold the qualifications required for those positions.

For these reasons, most of the time, the fact that the main wage earner is unemployed means that it is virtually impossible for other groups of people, such as women and young adults, to get jobs. Thus, the remaining jobs available to them are usually extremely low-paying physical work, which is usually avoided by male adult workers. Although women without work experiences and with a lower level education can work for the low-paying and dirty jobs, it would not last long due to the fact that working in the sector is not compatible with their domestic duties. The low- paying job gives them a similar or slightly higher amount of money, as offset by an extra amount of house-keeping expenses. Among the respondents interviewed, only five of them had wives working, and most of them had college level education holders and had secure jobs in big firms before their current unemployment. Therefore, the assumption that other family members might help the unemployed father materially is more associated with those from the upper and middle classes than from the lower class.

Second, a function of family as a source of emotional support tends to depend on the nature of material availability through savings and existence of properties in the family. Although it can be argued that poor family members are closer and are more sympathetic with each other than their rich counterparts are, the interviews with unemployed men show that poor families provided a lot of burden and stress rather than giving expected emotional support. Two respondents, aged 28 and 29, said that they did not want to meet their parents because parents would frequently ask them about their job-searching results. Although the man aged 29 receives material support from his parents who had delivered food and necessities, and who sent living expenses since his college entrance, he feels very uneasy about encountering his parents due to a burden of responsibility as an adult son. The man aged 28, who is unemployed due to a company closure, left home after staying with his parents for three months because he felt a lot of shame to his parents about not making material contributions to his family. He himself was very frustrated for not meeting his parents' expectation of him. He said that he would never return to his parents if he was not to succeed in his life, even though he experienced sleeping on the street for a while and currently lives in a homeless shelter.

Another type of stressful familial relationship is that the unemployed men left home and became homeless due to inevitable conflicts with other family members. One respondent, unemployed due to a business failure, had lived with his son's family and experienced the difficulties in living with them because of his daughter-in-law. His stressful emotional symptoms led to his suicide attempt

and eventually to being homeless. His other married children hardly provided material and emotional support to him.

10-2: My son takes care of me very well, but I was not comfortable living with my daughter-in-law. I speak straightforwardly and it hurts her. I knew that I should not have done so, but could not change my behavior. I left my son's house because I thought my daughter-in-law would be at pain because of me. I got a phone call from my daughter-in-law; she asked me to come back home. But still she does not know where I am.

Another man, aged 65, was living in a local inn left home without any money and later his son refused to take care of him when he asked for help. His physical and psychological symptoms were so severe that he could not endure pains from his illness without taking strong doses of pain relief.

The familial relationships in the lower class, whose material resources are not sufficient, tended to be very weak and vulnerable when dealing with stressful life events. A family head's unemployment in lower-class families is detrimental to family well-being because it would destroy even an already weak bond between family members and deplete even a little resources of the family. In sum, the examples above indicate that arbitrarily prescribed assumption on family as a source of material and emotional support would inhibit a deeper understanding of family functions, which are heavily affected by social environments. Thus, it can be concluded that the existence of family must be beneficial for people from the upper and middle classes, but it would not be so for people from the lower class.

4.2 WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FAMILY?

Material deprivation

Material hardship is the most widely known problem facing the unemployed, who are both from the middle and lower classes. Some argue that because of availability of welfare benefits to the families with unemployed fathers, material deprivation would not be widely experienced by the unemployed in the modern world. However, the argument may be true neither in the Western world nor in a country such as Korea, whose welfare benefits are not enough to eliminate poverty. According to Elder (1974) and Moen (1980), financial hardship frequently results from the unemployment of a family earner, and the extent of hardship has been defined in two ways: (1) an income level insufficient to meet family needs and (2) economic deprivation, i.e., the loss of at least 30 percent of the income earned before unemployment. The interviews with the unemployed men in this study showed that all of them had experienced more than 30 percent of income loss since their job loss.

In Korea, both the unemployed and employed have experienced severe reductions in income, resulting in reduced consumption of food (70% among the lower class), clothes and shoes (30%), entertainment (29.4%), furniture and home appliances (28.6%), and eating out (28%) (Korean National Statistics Office 1999). Lower-class unemployed people suffer more from income loss and income reductions because most of them are excluded from various social benefits such as unemployment insurance, pensions, and retirement benefits. According to the National Survey on Income (1999) in Korea, income gaps

categorized by levels of educational attainments were exacerbated after the end of 1997, with 16.7 percent of income reductions and 15 percent of reductions in household spending for middle school graduates, and 14.2 percent and 20.4 percent for some college graduates.

The National Statistics Office in Korea reported that the bottom 20 percent have lost 20 percent of their income and reduced 15 percent of their household spending, while the top 20 percent gained more income by 27 percent in 1999. This result shows that economic difficulties are not evenly distributed across social class, and lower class people suffer more from economic deprivation while the rich gain more profits from higher interest rates changed as a result of the economic adjustment program at least right after the IMF intervention. This social disparity is associated with a high level of suicide and crime rates, loss of self-efficacy and control, and a high level of alcohol intake and drug dependency.

All respondents mentioned their desperate material situations, despite the great variation by previous occupations, different sources of income, and availability of social support. Most respondents, except for college graduates who had worked for big companies, lived on between \$200 and \$500 a month, including government cash transfers and/or income from their public work which allows the unemployed to get only for three months and for which they should reapply after three months of working as a public worker. Thus, even their income of \$300 reported at the time of interviews does not guarantee their livings later after three months.

One of the reasons that make it possible for them to live with the tiny income is that they do not pay for a monthly rent. It is rare in Korea to pay a monthly rent; instead, tenants pay a bulk of money as a deposit to the landlord at the time of rent and get the money back when they move out. Thus, with this system tenants are free of a monthly rent, but they should prepare for an annual raise of deposit. The unemployed interviewed reported that they should move to a cheaper apartment every year because they could not afford the deposit raise. Some of the unemployed with savings had to buy a house out of city to avoid the burden of a rent raise.

A total of seven respondents reported their experiences of extremely severe economic hardships after their job loss. Such households typically had only one wage earner, who worked previously for unskilled or semi skilled blue-collar, clerical or service jobs. Three wives of the unemployed with college educations reentered the labor force after their husbands' job-loss to supplement family income. Other wives of the unemployed with a junior college or lower levels of education did not work because of lack of available jobs and adequate qualifications. Even some available jobs for the wives could not reward enough money to compensate for their resignation of housework and childcare. Therefore, it was rational for them not to work out of home but to take care of families and to do housework. However, it was apparent that most wives attempted to find a job even as a temporary worker at a variety of low paying workplaces.

The reality of a harsh atmosphere around the labor market affected the severe material hardship of the unemployed and their families. After three years

of the economic crisis, they ran out of savings and bank loans as well as out of material support from their networks. Extreme cases include skipping meals and living without electricity and heat. Lesser severe cases were to cut off spending on clothes, entertainment, and family vacations. People from the lower class tended to suffer from difficulties eating and paying bills, while people from the middle class were more likely to be concerned about their destroyed dreams for themselves and their children.

Problems with Getting Necessities

An extreme case of material hardship was indicated by most of respondents who became unemployed due to business failure, which often involves indebtedness and loss of properties and assets as well as loss of social networks due to their bad credit. These people addressed that they had to sleep on the street or in the train station, and two former business owners had to stay at homeless shelters. A 48-year-old man, divorced, living with a daughter, and who had owned his doll factory and lost his job due to the factory bankruptcy, said the following of his experience:

2-3: One day electricity was cut off because I could not afford to pay for electricity. After that, we lived with a piece of candlelight. There was no heat in the house. Since I did not clear off my debts, the police also were searching for me. Even so, I had to use some money for my daughter to get prepared for her school. We ran out of rice and could not eat anything for days. Sometimes we ate only an instant noodle soup all day. We had lived like that for two years. I could not say anything to my daughter. I had given up doing something.

A 54 year-old former construction worker with a son described the following:

3-5: It was late when I figured out there was public work available. It was 1999. It had started since 1998. I went to the office of dong (the village office). I was very desperate without money to pay for my son's school lunch. It was \$30 a month. Eating is necessary, but I could not afford it. And my son's teacher asked me to see him. I had not paid for the bill twice. So I told the teacher that I had worked as a construction worker but was laid off. I also so said that I am only one who could take care of my son. Then, in the following month, I got a letter from the teacher saying that the school would provide free lunch to my son. Thus, I told my son that your teacher was a really nice person, and if you grow up, you should go to visit your teacher.

A respondent, aged 65, who lost his job due to business failure commented:

11-1: I am desperate. I have lived in an inn paying \$100 a month in the summer and \$150 a month in the winter. I maintained this living arrangement with help from my friends around me. It has been long not to earn money.

Another respondent, aged 28, describes the ashamed experience that he was found by a friend while sleeping at a train station:

12-3: My twin brother and I had stayed in inns or sauna centers. It was too expensive to stay there. At the same time, we could not find a job, resulting in sleeping in the station. One day I met, in the station restroom by accident, a friend of mine who informed me this homeless shelter. The friend bought me breakfast. I was so ashamed about myself.

Running Out of Savings, Bank Loans, and Selling Properties to Moving to Cheaper Places

The processes the unemployed had followed to deal with their material hardship ranged from spending unemployment insurance and savings and getting bank loans, to selling properties or valuable items and moving to cheaper places.

Although some of families do not experience such an extreme material hardship, many of them had to move to cheaper places. Since many of Koreans have a moderate amount of money deposited for rent, they tended to use part of the deposit to deal with emergency deprivation by moving to lower-priced apartments. A former chef who has been out of work for one year talked about moving to a cheap place gradually:

6-4: I have made living with the deposit for my house rent, whose amount was reduced from \$50,000 to \$25,000. And part of the living expenses was made from temporarily work available sometimes.

A former manager in a big construction company with three years of unemployment describes his economic hardship and strategies to deal with it:

13-1: We ran out savings a long time ago. Now I live on bank loans and material support from my friends and church. It is so miserable after losing my job. To live, we have spent all savings and sold family properties such as land since 1998. Economically, it is worse now than before. On the top off that, my cosigning for a friend of mine ruined my family because the friend went into bankruptcy. I am terribly difficult financially now in particular.

While the unemployed from lower class worried about getting essentials, the unemployed from upper middle or middle class tended to focus on the concern about their children's education. Their understanding about upward social mobility through a high level of education forces them to feel stressed about their inability to support children's satisfactory education. One respondent, a former manager in a big company, describes his cancellation of children education insurance:

14-4: We have used some money in my saving accounts and cancelled education insurances for my children accounting for \$7,000. My parents, despite their difficult living, sent us some money.

Reducing Consumption on Items and Health Care Expenses

Due to economic hardship, some respondents addressed their economic ways to spend money on necessities. Two respondents who had children talked about their strategies about economic spending, such as buying used children's clothing and picking up donated items. Despite the folkway that wearing used clothes, particularly from unknown people, is a kind of taboo in Korea, the harsh economic condition influenced individuals' acceptance to the new social norms, which best fit into their situation.

3-12: I buy my son's shoes and clothes without brand names. Other children wear brand name clothes and shoes but my son does not care about it. I used to buy him those middle priced but I get him to wear clothes priced approximately \$10 a piece. I chose bigger sizes of clothes for him to wear at least for two years. I give him 30 cents or 50 cents twice a week and sometimes \$1 if he specially asks for. We've cut off almost all consumptions. Otherwise, we have children wear clothes other people give away. I feel hurt when my children do not complain about it, but wear them with a thankful mind.

Those who have a tight family budget also frequently said that they reduced side dishes on dinner tables and often ate their meals with basic and simple side dishes such as eggs, dried seaweed, and *kimchi*,²¹ which are very inexpensive but still nutritious. They perceived that replacing types of food they had eaten with substitute food is one of ways to live on such a tight family budget. A respondent doing public work which pays him about \$500 a month and living with his parents and two children depicts how the economic crisis makes him feel

²¹ A typical spicy pickle made of Chinese cabbages, reddish, and green onions. Koreans always eat their meals with *kimchi*.

relatively poor and what strategies he has adopted to feed his four dependents with an insufficient amount of family income.

23-3: I feel the economic crisis from my material situation. In the past, with my salary, I could save some money even after all family members spent. In the present, even with the same kind of job, you should reduce spending a lot. You cannot think of savings and should reduce the number of side dishes and give up buying electronic home appliances. Even you cannot dream of buying the items that are new to the market. Saving is impossible unless both wife and husband work.

In addition, the reduction in medical care expenses was very typical among the unemployed who think that visiting a doctor is very luxurious and unimaginable. Many of them responded that they went to a doctor only if they had serious illness.

2-26: I've never gone to a doctor since I had a stroke. I do not have health insurance. It was suspended in 1992. I had not paid fees and started to get Medicare in 2000. The coverage of the Medicare is very low.

Reducing Socializing with Others

Keeping the family healthy means that family members spend longer time and enjoy entertainment together through a variety of family activities such as family vacations, eating out, and visiting relatives and friends. It is no doubt that these family activities provide closer relationships between members, and are an effective means to extend a mutual understanding and trust. The family with an unemployed head has strongly limited chances to be closer to each other because their poor economic situation is insufficient to have family activities. Except for listening to music from a radio and watching television together, these families tend to cut off other family activities due to material hardship. Even middle-class families reported that they felt very stressful when their friends' families invited

them and asked to have vacations together. One respondent living with his wife and two children talked about the situation:

31-5: We spend 60,000 won (\$46) to 70,000 won (\$54) on rice and total 200,000 won (\$154) on food a month. Including the bills for electricity and telephone, we spend 300,000 won (\$230) a month. I think that we use 1,000,000 won (\$770) a month for living expenses. It is so hard to maintain our living. Despite our every effort, there is no way to reduce spending on food and other maintenance fees. You cannot eliminate a television set, which entertains us. I also should pay the interest of my debts. Paying the interest gives me a lot of financial burden. We reduced the spending on eating out, relative visits, and participating in activities with friends. I feel so bad for me to refuse visiting my friends who invite my family.

Broken Relationships

Social and economic crises in South Korea affected marital conflicts and weakened family relationships, showing a high increase in divorce cases from 22,324 couples in the first quarter of 1997 to 36,735 couples in the same period of 1998, or a 64 percent of increase (Korea Bureau of Statistics 1999). Family disruption such as divorce and frequent marital conflicts between a couple would influence higher cases of runaway youth and nutritional deficiency among children as well as loss of close social relationships which is detrimental to the physical and mental health of the unemployed.

Unemployment also means the loss of a major role, a role that is considered desirable, socially valued, and even essential for men with rigid, traditional values, or for either men or women whose identity is part of their profession (Voydanoff 1984). Work determines the amount of time spent with

the family and the structure and pattern of family activities. When a family member becomes unemployed and spends substantially more time at home, family routines are disrupted, and tensions increase (LeMasters 1975). Root (1977) points out that the psychological effects on the unemployed lead to strain and concern among other family members. Children of the unemployed also are at higher risk of illness (Margolis and Farran 1981). One respondent describes how his job loss caused by a business failure affected his family disruption:

11-1: My family rejected to take care of me. They think that I failed my business due to my inability and laziness, and was not a responsible father and husband. So they distanced me. I got a divorce right after my business failure and have a married son and a daughter who studies abroad. My children have rejected seeing me for 5 years. I become crazy missing them. I had a conflict with my wife over my idea that we should first pay back our debts rather than using money for my family. I thought I must not harm others. My wife left me at the time I became ill. She had a strong prejudice against me. My wife tended to blame me for my family's unhappiness and material deprivation. She left me then. It was my fault not to keep my family. But I do not have any debts now. I paid all of them back. I cannot say that I was right. It was my mistake, but so regretful. I think it would be selfish if I ask her why she did not understand me at that time. My son hangs up the phone whenever he hears my voice. I expect so much him to take care of me more than any others do, but it is appeared that he cut off our father-son relationship. Though I am so distressed about it, I think I should change if he could not do it.

Changes in the Relationship between Husband and Wife

Unemployment changes every aspect of family life, including relationships between husband and wife and between parents and children. Many of studies on unemployment and the family have reported that there are significant changes in the relationship between couples. Even if a worker is not blamed for being unemployed, he or she may be seen as failing in the role as a

family provider. The loss of the provider role was a key element in those families where the husband lost his authority in relation to his wife and adolescent children during the Depression of the 1930s (Komarovsky 1940). The sense of failure may be intensified when wives and adolescents take jobs or when family members hold rigidly traditional sex-role norms (Anderson 1980; Angell 1936; Cavan 1959; Vondanoff 1963).

The first of the reasons that promote the changes, better or worse, is that the husband does not support materially his family anymore and loses his role as a breadwinner and his authority as a head of the family, often making some conflict with other family members. Some argue that there are not many changes in a couple's relationship until their savings are depleted. At the early stage of unemployment for a head of household, other family members tend to understand and comfort him. Some of respondents in this study said that their wives asked them to go out together for movies, climbing, and any other entertainments as part of comforting activities. During the period of economic crisis in Korea, there was a great amount of public sympathy for those who were retired early and forced to quit their jobs. The public sympathy was enhanced by the media through television dramas on "face-bending husbands" and newspapers reporting on unemployed fathers who left home. The media's emphasized coverage on the issue led to the public campaign on enhancing fathers' self-confidence. The public campaign had focused on a consensus that fathers are in a double jeopardy: a scapegoat at work and a loser of authority at home.

Korean society has held a very traditional family definition and a patriarchal relationship between the father and other family members. Men's powerful authority at home is maintained by their distinct and unique role as a breadwinner, supported by their perceptions on both men's economic and psychological superiority over women. Once the husband makes money sufficient to support his family, other essential components of the role as a father and husband could be forgotten.²² As long as the husband has a job, which allows him to make a moderate amount of money, it is unlikely that he could lose his authority increasingly at home. The pay disparity between men and women at work also implies the consolidation of the social norm that the husband should support his family by receiving more money in the workplaces than their female counterparts.

However, the incidence of mass unemployment, accelerated by the adoption of labor-market flexibility among corporations after the economic crisis, has affected the social norm; for example, the husband's authority, underpinned by his active economic role at the labor market, has faced economic and moral crises due to the emergence of mass unemployment. Fathers and husbands' authority at home has been threatened further by the other family members' taking over the economic role. With the loss of the ability to support his family, the husband may not be comfortable with many kinds of roles performed by their families to supplement family incomes. There is a lot of evidence about an unemployed father's anxiety about his role. Some of unemployed men left home

²² For example, many of fathers and husbands have avoided doing housework and the child and elderly care duties within the family, despite a gradual increase in men helping women with domestic duties in South Korea.

and became homeless. Other unemployed men hang around parks and streets all day. Some men are not honest about their unemployment to their family members, so they pretend to have a job by leaving home every morning at the same time. Others drink and fight all the time, eventually having a divorce and separation.

As a result, Korean society tried to hold the traditional notion of the family despite the revealed crisis of husbands and fathers, unemployed or even employed by perpetuating the idea of enhancing father's authority through the public campaign. In particular, the media took a role to revive the traditional father's authority and to prevent increased father's deviant behaviors. A respondent at age 59, who lost his job from an early retirement and had spent time in the park all day since his job-loss, explains the stressful relationship with his wife:

21-6: Sometimes, I got angry because my wife became cranky, I thought I should not be, but I am.. because I am so depressed. My wife was shocked by my job-loss more than I was due to economic matters. With 1,000,000 won (approximately \$770), we should live for a month. If we are invited to weddings and parties, our pockets become empty.

Second, despite all the society's public efforts to value the traditional role of fatherhood in Korea, the positive outcomes have been few. The campaign for enhancing men's self-confidence and self-esteem does not result in a decrease in homeless men and in family disruption. The cruel economic mechanism, based on the labor market flexibility, has not been diminished by the forced morality and traditional values. The government's efforts to provide more welfare programs for unemployed made little impact on the well-being of the families suffering from unemployed fathers. Family members who attempted to give emotional support to their unemployed husband or father soon would lose their emotional calmness due

to the threat of material hardship. Therefore, it was time for the wife and adult children to find some jobs for survival. In three years of the economic recession, they ran out of any of valuable assets, including savings, houses, and even the availability of social networks. Those people around the family with an unemployed father must be smart enough to realize that some money borrowed by the unemployed families will never be paid back.

Increased availability of temporary, part-time, and low paying jobs helped married women obtain an opportunity to change the relationship between a husband and wife and even to challenge their husband's authority. The reason that some jobs become available for women is that the jobs are too little paying and insecure to attract male workers. In contrast, married women relatively prefer to have temporary and part-time jobs, which allow them to have some of available time to take care of family members and also some room to be in or out of work according to their husbands' employment conditions. They might feel less stress than men to get lower-paying jobs, and are more likely to tolerate job insecurity than men do due to their traditional responsibility taking care of the family. Ironically, many of women in Korea are willing to be subsidized to their husband by rejecting the idea of taking over the breadwinner's role from their husband. In part, they are afraid of taking the role permanently. They think that if they work out of home and earn a lot of money, then problems will result from their husband becoming dependent on them. Some of respondents talked about the experience of their wife's rejection of their help with housework although wives work at retail stores all day.

I am willing to help my wife with housework. It does not matter to me. I don't care about what other people tell us about that. One day, I prepared dinner and cleaned up the apartment before my wife gets back from work. I imagined how happy she is with that. But what I was expected was totally different. She was very angry at me and cried, yelling that she did not want me to do housework, and she said that she wanted me to get a job and go back to the previous role as a breadwinner. Then, she did all housework afterward. That made me feel very uncomfortable. I could not stay home. Even nowhere to go, I go out anywhere. Being home makes me guilty.

Not Yet Ready to Accept Changed Social Environment

This section discusses a question of how macroeconomic changes shape and affect individual's relations and cultural aspects. In other words, families are greatly influenced by huge economic changes, which resulted in mass unemployment and a replacement of regular with irregular jobs attracting married women to be out of home. In the family with an unemployed father, the conflict between husband and wife is derived from two ways. First, both of them do not accept and understand the changed situation where the husband does not support the family materially anymore and stays home for a large amount of time. Second, one of them accepts and understands the situation but the other does not. In the former case, the couple would have an on-going disagreement and conflict. A good way to escape the stressful spousal relation is to avoid being together. The husband acts like he has a job by going out regularly everyday. They believe that pretending to have a job and, therefore, maintaining the appearance of the status quo might protect their already vulnerable relationship originally caused by the husband's unemployment. Holding the traditional value helps them follow what

they have done so far and does not necessarily push them to accept the newly emerged social norm. However, they should face harsh demands from the society, which proceeds their understanding of a new environment and forces them to internalize the new norms and values. Therefore, this section is intended to explore how societal change affects individual's understanding and adopting new roles, examining the relationship between husband and wife in the unemployed family.

The Private Sphere Versus the Public Sphere

There is a debate among Korean feminists on the changed relationship between wife and husband after the economic crisis. An idea points out that the social position and right of women would be enhanced by their extended participation in the workforce to supplement family income in the face of their husbands' insecure employment. The feminist with this argument insist that the increase in women's participation in the labor force contribute to the enhancement of women's position in the public sphere and to more egalitarian relationship between men and women. After the economic crisis, there has been a decrease in regular and higher paying jobs held by women and an increase in part-time and contingent jobs, which are of particular interest to women, who might prefer part-time jobs to gain some time for housework and child care. As a reserved army in the labor market, married women could find employment of the changed labor market. In fact, the changed market increased married women's employment after the economic crisis in Korea. It was also inevitable for married women to find jobs in the face of their husbands' unemployment. Thus, some feminists has

attempted to interpret the changed labor market as a favorable condition, which might enhance women's public roles and reduce their housework responsibilities, thus ultimately leading to a fairly equalitarian relationship between men and women in South Korea, where traditional gender roles are still prevalent.

On the other hand, other feminists in South Korea hold a pessimistic viewpoint about the increase in married women's participation in the labor force caused by the economic crisis. They argue that the trend would be temporary and not achieved by purely women's efforts, but passively followed due to men's relative insecurity in the workforce. It is also argued that there are decreases in professional jobs for women, who are moving to extremely insecure jobs. They point out that the contingent jobs available to married women do not necessarily provide higher levels of women's increased roles in the public sphere, rather serving male managers and supervisors. At the same time, the relationship between husband and wife has changed very little since married women's participation in the workforce and wives still prepare most of meals and do child care. This situation is viewed as very similar to the second shift, where women's double burdens on earning income and doing housework are exacerbated due to their higher level of participation in the labor force in the advanced capitalist countries.

Although these two arguments encompass very reasonable explanation on the nature of women's power and rights in South Korea, this paper deals with the issue using a spatial theory. All human beings occupy some of spaces, both private and public. Traditionally, the distinction between the private and public

spaces has been very clear in South Korea, where men occupy more public spaces as wage earners and women occupy more private spaces as homemakers. The public space is represented by male workers who spend most of their time and socialize with others there. For the reason, it is not surprising that a male self-identity is closely related to their positions in the workplace, which provides them with social status, prestige, and power as a social being. Due to the importance of their roles at the public sphere, most Korean men have tended to be exempted from duties related to housework. Most of housework and child/elderly care in each household have been considered women's work in Korea.

Nevertheless, women exercise some levels of authority in the private sphere, inside the home. Most Korean women have rights to make major decisions within the home's boundaries. Women often manage house income earned by their husbands and other family members and decide how to spend the money for the family's well-being. The kitchen, among other areas of the house, in South Korea is a symbol of women's place, where traditionally men have not been allowed to enter and to interfere with housework issues. Even in the modern Korea, older generations still keep this custom so that they can prohibit their sons from entering the kitchen, which is women's place.

From this tradition, this paper argues that a less clear boundary between the public and private sphere might enhance an equal relationship between women and men; for example, men might do housework when their wives work outside home to earn family income. If not, women's full participation in the labor force might be delayed and bring about a great deal of family conflicts

regarding housework and caring duties because the introduction of social services related to assisting housework and caring facilities, such as daycare centers and nursing homes, is yet a long way to come in South Korea. Most Korean men feel uncomfortable being at home during daytime when they are supposed to work and when women do most of housework duties.

The interviews conducted in the present study show that there is still a clear distinction between the private and public spheres in South Korea. Women's participation in irregular jobs has not necessarily resulted in better social positions and equal relationships with men both in private and public spheres. The unemployed men reported that their wives did all types of housework, although wives work for retail stores for more than ten hours a day. At the same time, most of the unemployed men do not stay home during the daytime. For them being at home itself is stressful for several reasons. First, home is not considered to be men's area during the daytime when women occupy at home enjoy some level of freedom while other family members are away. Men's presence at home during the daytime might disturb women's daily activities such as cleaning up house, talking with friends on the phone, doing gardening, and taking a nap. Being together at home also affects some levels of vague boundaries between women's work and men's work. For example, men staying home possibly interfere with some of family matters, which had been solely women's decisions. Men's interference with women's free decisions on house matters and children's activities often lead to conflicts between the unemployed father and other family members. Most of relational problems between spouses tend to be caused by the

unclear definition about their roles, including decision-making processes, and house matters, although material hardship and less higher authority of unemployed men in the family should be primarily taken into account. Thus, unemployed husbands realize that they might fight with their wife more often if they stay home during the daytime. One respondent thought that he had frequent fights with his wife because he arrives at home early.

15-3: My wife is really afraid of my unemployment status and our future lives. My kids are high-school and middle-school students. We have had a lot of fights caused by economic hardship. But it was not serious. I get home early about at 8. My wife does not always like me to come home early. I try to talk a lot with my kids, but they are more likely to be with their friends. That is a little bad. They dislike to get together with family.

Father's interference with children's life results in a troubled relationship between the father and the children. Another respondent said:

13-2: I teach my children to be responsible, active, and optimistic persons and do whatever you want to do, but if you have problems with that, ask for help. My children have different norms and thoughts from mine, which sometimes leads to some conflicts between us. They listened to me very well when they were young, but they don't now. What changed is that I tend to scold them more than when I had job. In other words, I have too much time to ignore trivial things that my children do. As a result, my children seem to be very annoyed by me. They became constrained with me, but do not look like they worry about me.

Second, men feel very stressed about being at home because they lose social involvement and gathering with others. Although most of unemployed men tend to cut off previous relationships with former coworkers and friends, they are still looking for other types of social attachment. Being at home does not allow plenty of social networks to the unemployed, who recognize the importance of making friends and of being social beings. That is the reason that most of

unemployed men go out and come back home at regular time as they used to do as a worker. Many of respondents said that they do not stay home during the daytime and go out to hang around the street or to the park where they can talk with other unemployed people and share some information on jobs with them. Unless they go to the park, others indicate that they frequently go to the library. Men tended to feel much comfortable being in the public sphere than in the private sphere, the home, during the daytime. An early-retired respondent said that he had a lot of fights with his wife after his unemployment, so he spends his days outside the home. Staying out of the home during the daytime help him avoid fights with his wife as well as socialize with other people.

21-4: I stay at the park, going around all the parks near home. I could meet those who could chat with me. There are many people who come daily. I had some amount of pension I received every month and my wife did not know about. I had got for one year and got also unemployment insurance benefits for four months. It was a little less than my salary. I had spent about 30,000 to 35,000 won a day. I came back home at seven pm, which was one hour earlier than the time I finished at work. I eat dinner at home. I spend time at park for a while and sometimes go to the place where I can play an oriental chess with people. I cannot go there everyday because I cannot afford to pay for the game. We play for lunch. I have played the chess for 20 years. I used to go there twice a week after work when I had a job. Then I go fishing to the Han River. I should pay for the place in which I do fishing. 1,000 won for all day, but you have to buy bite at 10,000 won. I go fishing three or four times a month.

Third, many of men are not willing to share housework duties and caring responsibility with their wife. Because of either the traditional norms, against men's housework performance, or because they are bored with housework, most men tend to avoid doing housework. However, their willingness to share housework is often discouraged by women themselves, such as their

mother and wife, who feel guilty when they ask men to do housework. At the same time, some of respondents said that their wife fears the unemployed husband's willingness to do housework because of the possible case of changing roles between husband and wife. For example, if the husband enjoys housework and caring for other family members, he will stop seeking a job and become a homemaker, thus requiring his wife to support the family materially. Women fear a situation where they become a main breadwinner of their family, and where their husbands become incapable to get a job because of the housework. Thus, although working wives are very tired of doing housework, they tend to continue doing it. In addition, traditional values and norms, widely accepted the larger society, also heavily influence their decision on housework duties. Most of men and women in South Korea would feel the most comfortable with traditional social norms, including gender roles, which they have kept for a long time. One respondent with a college education who had worked for a big construction company and served as a chairman for his company's labor union describes a patriarchal relationship with wife:

7-2: I had been employed in one of biggest business groups in Korea. Most white-collar workers had never doubted that their companies would be bankrupt and they could move to another company. Our lives were stable with pretty higher salaries and planned future. Parents did not worry about their son's independent lives and families were maintained without big concerns. After a year of my unemployment, my wife started working. That means we were able to live for one year without income. With my wife's employment, we could maintain our living by reducing the size of spending a little. Although the society is changing rapidly towards gender equality, our homes are still in patriarchy in reality. I have not talked much about this with my wife. I thought that I had to fulfill my social duties prior to my duties at home. It was my responsibility to make my family live, not my wife's. I have not discussed this issue with my wife much.

Later she began to work for supplementing family income. But I guess she could understand that well. It was more difficult to get my parents and siblings to understand my situation.

Therefore, this evidence shows that it is very hard to conclude that the increase in married women's participation in the irregular jobs contribute to women's higher social position and relatively equal relationships with men. Both women and men still hold the concept of traditional gender roles by differentiating private from public spheres. Men's feeling of uneasiness at home also indicates that they are not ready to accept changing social norms about gender roles. However, avoiding being together during the daytime also functions as a coping strategy, which helps the unemployed men avoid a possible conflict with other family members.

CHAPTER 5 UNEMPLOYMENT AND HEALTH

Evidence for a direct relationship between health and unemployment is scarce, in the sense of hard facts, and also problematic in terms of their relationship. Previous studies on health and unemployment have shown that layoffs may also negatively affect workers' physical well-being, although perhaps not as dramatically. Unemployment also has a sizeable negative impact on physical problems that contribute to more major illnesses, such as high blood pressure, increased heart rate, palpitations, and ulcers (Linn, Sandifer, and Stein 1985). Job loss seems to have the strongest effect on psychosomatic illnesses, such as sleeping disorders, eating disorders, overuse of sedatives, dermatitis, headaches, and listlessness (Kessler, Turner, and House 1985). Unemployment requires great psychological adjustment, which in some cases may contribute to mental disorders.

One significant feature associated with ill health and unemployment is that not only does unemployment adversely affect one's health, but ill health often narrows one's chances of finding employment as well. This is due to the amount of time required for physical and psychological recovery that leaves an obvious occupational gap on a person's resume. Also some unemployed individuals might have illnesses caused by psychological stress. Slow recovery can also impede one's chances of finding new employment. As such, the relationship between ill health and unemployment is quite complicated and multidimensional, and much more than we initially realize.

Two respondents in the present study reported that they suffered certain illnesses even before becoming unemployed. One person who contracted cancer said that he had given his company a copy of a fake health examination that he obtained from a doctor who had agreed to conduct it. At the time, he was afraid of losing his job due to ill health and thus tried to conscientiously maintain his health. The other respondent, who had a severe kidney problem, also experienced joblessness several times due to ill health as being ill was stigmatized by the companies at which he worked. First, his ability to find a job was stymied by his ill health, which prevented him from doing heavy physical work. Second, working as a manual worker in various factories did not last long as his ill health made it difficult for him to perform his assigned duties as he needed to use the restroom once every hour, which interfered with his work on an assembly line. Consequently, he had to move from one factory to another several times and thus never enjoyed secure employment throughout his working life. As White (1994:45) explains:

It is important to realize that ill health has quite a different significance once a person is unemployed. Ill health, in most cases, consists of episodes that come to an end; the individual can recover and be capable of working effectively once again (while perhaps needing to transfer to different jobs). Once out of a job, however, the problems of ill health add to those of being unemployed: employers may be reluctant to risk recruiting a person who has recently had a serious illness. The advantage of remaining employed while recovering from ill health is therefore a very considerable one.

5.1 HEALTH PROBLEMS PERCEIVED BY RESPONDENTS

The physical health problems experienced by the unemployed in this study include heart disease, stroke, myocardial infraction, amblyopic, severe headaches, diabetes, paralysis, hypertension, weight loss, bad blood circulation, and hepatitis. These physical health problems experienced by the respondents were strongly associated with their age and the reasons for their unemployment. Older respondents, over the age of 50, were more likely to experience health problems than younger respondents. In addition, business failure -- which is frequently associated with material deprivation, shock, and family disruption -- has a strong association with chronic diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, and stroke. Psychosocial health problems -- such as depression, insomnia, as well as loss of sexual drives, appetite, and self-control -- were frequently expressed by both younger and older respondents. Those respondents aged over 50 who did not experience business failure reported fewer severe illnesses and had mainly headaches, eye problems, and bad blood circulation. Respondents with at least a college education and who lived with their families were more likely to maintain their health than those without a college education.

Table 5-1: Health Problems Reported by Respondents

Num	Age	Education	Unemployed	Physical	Mental
10	65	High school	Bus. Failure	Diabetes	
11	65	College drop	Bus. Failure	H.D, Hypertension	Distress
13	64	Junior drop	Com. Closing	Bad Blood Circulation	Depression
21	59	High School	Early Retired	Cancer*	
31	59	College	Bus. Failure	H.D, Stroke	
5	55	High school	Laid-off	Headaches	Distress
19	55	Elementary	Construction		
20	55	College	Early Retired		
3	54	Middle	Construction	Eye Problem	
30	52	Elementary	Construction	Stomach Problem	
15	50	College	Com. Closing		
2	48	Junior coll.	Bus. Failure	H.D, Eye Problem	
16	44	High School	Laid-off		
6	42	Elementary	Laid-off		Depression
23	42	Junior Coll.	Laid-off		Depression
26	42	High School	Laid-off		
28	41	High School	Laid-off		Depression
25	40	High School	Construction		
7	39	College	Com. Closing		Anger
14	38	College	Com. Closing	Stomach Problem	
24	36	College	Com. Closing		Depression Insomnia
27	36	College	Laid-off	Kidney Problem*	
8	35	College	Com. Closing		
22	35	College	Laid-off		Insomnia
17	34	High School	Laid-off		Depression
1	32	High School	Early Retired	Hepatitis	Anger
4	29	College	No Entry		
12	28	High School	Com. Closing		
18	25	Junior Coll.	No Entry		
29	24	High School	Laid-off		Distress

* Illnesses before unemployment.

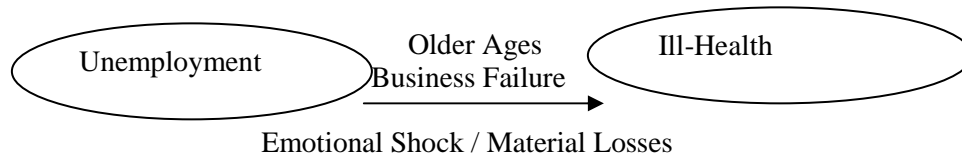
Table 5-1 shows that physical problems were strongly related to older respondents, while mental problems were more likely to be reported by younger respondents. A respondent, aged 37, described his mental symptoms in the following manner:

7-7: I'd never worried about my health before my unemployment. Now I feel the need to get detailed health check ups. Mentally, I've lost self-control and have started to openly display my emotions. The doctor regards me as a madman. In particular, I yell at my children and wife when the house is messy and disorganized. Rather than telling my children to be quiet when they are noisy, I now easily become angry. This could be a symptom of mental illness. I was not like that before. I now burst out in anger at the littlest things.

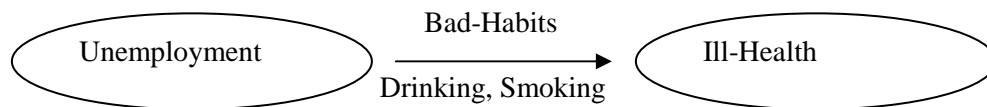
However, one reason why younger unemployed individuals rarely reported physical problems may be due to not undergoing medical check-ups after losing their jobs. Although in the past, these individuals had regular check-ups at work, which were required of all employees, now, they can no longer afford to visit the doctor as their material hardship prevents them from receiving regular check-ups.

Figure 5-1: Models for the Relationship between Unemployment and Ill-Health

<Model 1> Age and Business Failure



<Model 2> Bad Habits



<Model 3> Failures in Job-Seeking

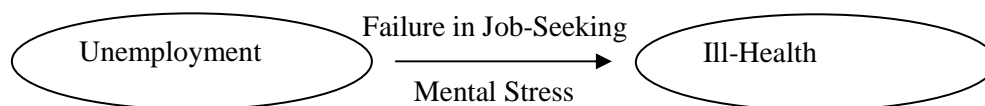


Figure 5-1 shows three models, which can be applied to the relationship between unemployment and illness. The data collected through the interviews with unemployed men in South Korea show that older respondents who became unemployed due to business failure had relatively higher chances of experiencing serious physical illnesses, such as heart disease and stroke, as well as mental illnesses, such as depression and distress. In this case, job loss through unexpected reasons, which in turn can lead to severe emotional shock and frustration, is closely related to the occurrence of detrimental health problems, especially among older unemployed people.

Second, unemployment is often linked to heavy drinking and smoking, as well as irregular eating patterns, which are extremely detrimental to one's health. Many respondents admitted to continuous heavy drinking and not eating well during periods immediately after losing their jobs. Bad habits, particularly heavy drinking, tend to cause many types of physical and mental illnesses. Although there are many reasons why both younger and older respondents engage in bad habits after losing their jobs, the younger unemployed were more likely to abandon their efforts to find new jobs, and moreover, succumb to the unexpected hardships of unemployment. Throughout this stressful period, some respondents experienced several negative physical symptoms, such as severe weight loss and blackouts, which caused many of them to be hospitalized. Thus, ill health as induced by unemployment may be linked to poor habits that the unemployed engage in for extended periods of time.

Third, job-seeking activities tend to involve a variety of unpleasant experiences such as rejection for unfair reasons, extremely limited job postings, and employers' discrimination toward an applicant's education level and age. Meanwhile, while hunting for a job, the unemployed tended to work in odd jobs, which pay much less and usually involve strenuous physical labor. These temporary job experiences are also associated with lower levels of self-esteem and self-confidence among the unemployed whose personal expectations cannot be satisfied with jobs that offer lower salaries and involve heavy physical work. Many respondents perceived various mental symptoms, such as insomnia and depression, as being caused by the frustrations of job hunting. One respondent

who experienced repeated rejections from companies to which he applied became hospitalized in a mental health facility and was treated for a month. He admitted that he could not reconcile his feelings of contempt and shame as he sought new employment.

In applying these three models to the relationship between unemployment and ill health, the following section discusses how the unemployed perceive their health problems in relation to specific situations.

Health and Age / Business Failure

In general, my interviews with unemployed men show that an individual's health status is strongly associated with age and the reasons leading to their unemployment, particularly if unemployment resulted from a failed business. Those over 50 years of age responded that they experienced a number of health problems such as heart disease, cancer, hypertension, high blood pressure, and other various illnesses. In contrast, young respondents considered themselves as being healthy, notwithstanding heavy drinking. The older unemployed were more vulnerable to both acute and chronic diseases, due to their weaker physical condition as well as their bleak perceptions of finding another job and being able to achieve their life goals. The competitive labor market, accelerated by the economic crisis in South Korea, has tended to sacrifice older employees first who are removed from the labor force through early retirement policies and age discrimination. Unlike younger workers, the older unemployed realized that they have fewer opportunities to find new employment, and moreover, face greater obstacles for reentering the labor force. Unless they have substantial savings,

many of the older unemployed experience greater anxiety about their economic survival. It is thus not surprising that these feelings of hopelessness lead to psychological symptoms, which in turn cause physical illnesses.

Among my older unemployed informants, those who had experienced business failure tended to be at greater risk for chronic illnesses such as heart attacks. Even young respondents, with a medium age of 30, who experienced business failure also suffered from illnesses such as chronic hepatitis and heart problems. There are several reasons why business failure leads to ill health. First, business failure is associated with greater financial pressure even before the owner files for bankruptcy. Second, businessmen with financial hardships tend to have tense familial relationships, arising from seeking financial help from relatives and then failing to return the borrowed money. Third, family relationships often deteriorate, which may eventually lead to separation and divorce. Fourth, business owners who find their businesses failing tend to lose almost everything, including money, prestige, family, mutual trust with others, and their self-identity. In contrast to those who are laid off, individuals who have failing businesses are more likely to blame themselves and be harshly blamed by their family members. Former business owners tended to have lower self-esteem and self-confidence than unemployed who were laid-off. Fifth, in an attempt to alleviate emotional and material pressures, unemployed business owners are more likely to drink and thus harm themselves.

A respondent, aged 30, who once owned a used furniture store said:

1-10: One day I broke down, while selling vegetables. I felt dizzy, fell down, and was sent to a hospital. After the examination, the doctor

diagnosed it as chronic hepatitis. I am always exhausted when selling vegetables. It was a very hard job because I had to go out in the early morning and go around all day. So my fatigue gradually accumulated. After the diagnosis, I was immediately discharged from the hospital. The doctor asked me to rest for a while. But I continued to work. If not, who would feed my family? It was inevitable that I work. But I failed in my business. Then I began to have the feeling that I was no longer strong. So I stayed home for a while, and continued to stay home a long time.

Business failure also involves shock, pressure, and much self-blame on the part of former business owner. These kinds of negative psychological symptoms lead to heart problems and even stroke. Another respondent, aged 65, who experienced his business failed which led to family disruption described:

2-13: After my business was bankrupt, I could not solve money-related problems at all. The pressure led to heart disease. With the shock, I had a stroke. To relieve the pain, I took a lot of medication, which caused me to bleed for a month. My anus and internal organs became infected and then my health deteriorated even more.

2-27: I had a lot of stress and the stress caused heart disease. I had not been able to walk for three months. When I walked, I felt as if someone had tore off my chest. I felt that my body had shrunk and I could not breathe. Then I began to drink. If I suffered a stroke, I could not walk for two days. One of the most terrible experiences I had was when I fell down from the pain. People looked at me like I was an epileptic and I would not ask them for help even though my house was nearby. My heart had been O.K. before the economic crisis, but afterwards it worsened. At the time, I felt some pain in my heart. I worried if my myocardial infection recurred. So, I went to a doctor and got some x-rays done, but I could not visit the doctor because I could not afford to get treatment without health insurance. Instead, I read books on the disease and received advice from a doctor. The doctor told me that stress was the main cause for the disease's recurrence.

2-28: During the IMF crisis, I often experienced a pain in my chest. I thought my mental anger was causing the pain. One day, the police came to visit me while I was sleeping. Due to the bank debts that I could not clear, the bank reported it to the police. I was wanted by the police, but I did not know why. They then arrested me but later released me because I

did not look as though I would run away. I had to pay bail to get out of jail. This was one of the reasons that led to my illness, I think.

Two respondents experienced family disruption caused by business failure. The combination of old age and business failure resulted in detrimental mental problems. A 65-year-old respondent who experienced business failure and family disruption describes his illnesses:

10-1: I have diabetes and cannot speak well. It is also hard to breathe and to walk due to my leg pain. I went to visit both Western and herbal doctors and got medication. I got my diabetes right after my ex-wife left me. I hate her for leaving me when I was sick, but after awhile, I begin to feel sorry for her because she could not be happy with another man and without my family. I have these mixed feelings about her; thus I cry. I have a severe headache, which lasts for hours when it's extreme. I feel dizzy, I feel O.K. by eating candy.

Another old respondent who failed in his business lost his family and properties as well as his health:

11-1: After my business failed, I had a stroke, which left me paralyzed. Much stress due to my business failure and material difficulties led me to my paralysis. I also could not get adequate treatment and care, and was living alone. My illness was recovered slowly compared to those with the disease. My leg was not strong enough for me to walk well. I have many illnesses, including paralysis and hypertension. The doctor prescribes medicine to me for aches, pain, and difficulty in walking. My legs are too weak to walk. The pain depends on the temperature. It is much more painful in cold weather. The doctor provides me with free treatment to keep my blood pressure down. My eyes are getting worse since becoming paralyzed. I cannot read without a magnifying glass. I love reading but have a difficult time reading newspapers as my eyes fatigue easily. Last year, I experienced severe pain due to heart disease. It was so painful that I went to the emergency room by myself and got treatment. Then, I called my son's friend who asked my son to come get me. My son paid my medical expenses. I have heart disease due to stress and had surgery. I was hospitalized for 8 days and am still having difficulty breathing. Then I was on medication for two months. Without any insurance coverage for the medicine, I received help from the doctor who gave me free prescriptions

and medicine. I also have a blood vessel disease, which causes heart attacks. The attacks come once a half month. Without taking pain relievers, I cannot walk and sleep. I need at least three dollars to buy the medicine. Actually I need prolonged treatment, but cannot afford it. When walking, I feel severe pain in my head. The reason for the pain is that my nerves are not stable.

Bad Habits and Ill-Health

Being unemployed leads to a variety of bad habits that are harmful to one's health, including heavy drinking and smoking, irregular eating and sleeping patterns, and avoiding social activities. In particular, alcohol consumption is frequently used as a means to relieve stress and anxiety resulting from being jobless. Almost every respondent in this study, even those who did not drink at all before, reported engaging in heavy drinking after losing their jobs. Drinking for unpleasant reasons is frequently accompanied with other negative activities such as skipping meals and losing sleep, which are both detrimental to one's health. Although drinking and smoking might help the unemployed to temporarily cope with stress, it is obvious that these activities negatively affect both one's physical and mental health.

Respondents reported engaging in heavy drinking and experiencing irregular life styles when their job loss was sudden and unpredictable. Feelings of shock due to sudden unemployment often led to psychological problems. Higher levels of stress and anxiety in turn cause them to abandon a regular life style, leading to increased conflict with other family members who worry about and sometimes blame them for losing their jobs. A 36-year-old respondent living with his mother described how he spent his days engaging in drinking:

24-1: I watched TV until 9 or 10 am and then I went to bed and got up at 4 pm and ate breakfast late. Then I watched TV again and started to drink at 10 or 11. I wasted my time like this for three months. My mom left me alone or gave up... I bought alcohol by not letting my mother know and threw away the bottles of alcohol after drinking. My mother must have known of my drinking because she nagged me to stop drinking.

Not only is drinking itself harmful to one's health, but it also frequently introduces an irregular lifestyle which causes loss of appetite and weight loss. These symptoms are exacerbated by the tendency to drink at night, either to hide their drinking from other family members or to overcome insomnia. Once the unemployed start an irregular lifestyle that is combined with heavy drinking, it is very hard for them to escape this vicious circle. An informant replied that he realized his lifestyle had been irrational for months after he was hospitalized for a sudden coma that was caused by heavy drinking and not having eaten for days.

26-10: I often have headaches and become irritated. Nowadays, I am less stressed, maybe since last August. Honestly, my drinking was increased due to the reason of my unemployment. For one month, I could not sleep nor eat. I stopped eating for one month, drinking everyday. I also thought I would kill myself at that time. My body weight used to be 73 kg and then after one month it was 59 kg. I also could feel my eye sight getting weaker. I could not sleep at all, and just drank all day long. And because of my eating disorder, I fell and was hospitalized. Somebody called 911. My mother also did not eat because I did not. My sister scolded me for that. Then after I was released, I applied for this public job. I am aware of my wrongdoing because my mother did not eat and cried for me.

Another informant who skipped means to drink everyday noted:

13-9: I do not eat regularly. I have meals only once or twice a day. It is very hard to say that I've lost my appetite but I do not have anything that I want to eat. My body weight is fluctuating, going up and down. I heard that the frequent change in weight is because of stress. Before, I didn't see any weight changes despite eating nothing all day, but now I lose 4 to 5 kg each day from not eating. My stress has led to my poor health. I try to forget about my worries, which leads to bad health. My health was better

before. The longer this situation lasts, the more pressure I feel. Also getting help from others undermines my self-respect.

Some respondents had symptoms of alcoholism, which included constant drinking and spending all their money on it.

25-13: If I feel lonely, I drink alone, or with my neighbors. I drink up to two bottles of Soju²³ alone once a week. I smoke about a pack a day. If I drink a lot, I feel some pain in my head. I spend 300,000 to 400,000 Won (approximately \$230 to \$300) a month on food, cigarettes, and alcohol. There is nothing left. I love drinking so I don't have any money in my savings. I have no savings. I have lived vainly. Because of my drinking, I could not save money. Once I began drinking, I drank a lot. Drinking made me live like this. Drinking ruined my life. But I have since changed, once I get a job, I will never quit it. I drink two to three bottles in an hour. Drinking is my only hope now. The following day after drinking heavily, my legs lost energy, my knees were in pain. My body below the waist is getting weaker. After dinking, I also lose my appetite.

26-8: I started drinking a lot after I lost my shop. I lost all I had. Then I moved to this town and began drinking with my neighbors. I am now 100% different from my old friends, so I don't want to get together with them. It hurts my pride. Drinking makes it possible for me to forget what I want to forget, 80 % of my free time, I drink. I eat at most two meals. After work, I drink and then skip dinner.

10-6: I don't drink here because it is not allowed. I do not drink outside either. I used to drink a lot about one or two bottles of Soju. Drinking prevents me from having a clear mind. While drinking, I feel comfortable and easy, but after waking up, I am in pain. So, I say to myself that I should not do this, I should not fall down here. My health becomes so bad, that is why. No one is worried about me because I live alone. Who would go and make a bowl of soup for me? I should wake up and go to work even though I am sick to the point of dying.

Many of my respondents who engaged in heavy drinking reported a variety of other bad habits, which are strongly related to drinking. The first sign

²³ A kind of alcohol which is the most widely consumed alcoholic beverage in South Korea.

was skipping meals. Almost every respondent reported the pattern of heavy drinking without eating more than one meal a day. The influence of drinking on one's health is detrimental in itself, but the accompanied behaviors of loss of appetite and heavy smoking increases the severity of ill health. Moreover, those who drank heavily consistently reported experiencing severe headaches.

The younger the unemployed, the greater their chance of heavy drinking

In contrast to older respondents, younger unemployed individuals were more likely to practice bad habits. A group of white-collar engineers, who were laid off due to their company folding, responded that they drank almost everyday and started to experience bodily discomfort. Respondents in their 30s were concerned about their health, despite having never visited a doctor for a medical exam. Their discomfort often led them to seek medical assistance.

14-6: I drank about two bottles of Soju, which was heavily diluted. I had an irregular lifestyle, bad eating habits, and was drinking everyday. Last year I had problems with all of my internal organs, including the stomach and liver. So, I went to see a doctor at a University Hospital and was told that they found a tumor in my colon.

24-4: Other types of symptoms that I had were being anti-social, avoiding going out and drinking a lot, a bottle of Soju everyday. I did not like drinking but started drinking. I drank as a habit because it helped me stay relaxed. Drinking also helped me sleep.

Unemployment is a good time to reduce drinking

In contrast, some respondents commented that their alcoholic consumption decreased after losing their jobs. Drinking patterns are heavily influenced by an individual's social environment, such as economic instability and unfavorable working conditions. Most respondents felt that they were very stressed at work

and constantly worried about possible layoffs, which lead them to begin drinking. Higher levels of anxiety and frustration caused by job insecurity is prevalent among workers who are in a culture where heavy drinking is an acceptable means for assuaging unpleasant feelings. A 55-year-old respondent who retired early said that he could not cope with well the stress of possible layoffs at work. As a result, he often drank with his coworkers to reduce his anxiety. At the same time, heavy drinking culture among Korean workers and long working hours, which became even longer during the economic crisis, made it difficult to effectively maintain one's health. However, after leaving his job, this respondent was able to better manage his health by reducing his drinking and exercising regularly.

20-8: I have been exercising very hard. For example, I walk to the New Start Club for 40-45 minutes. I think that I am healthier now than before I lost my job. I drink less now. After learning how to use the computer, I had to have eye problems. However, if I experience stress, I try to solve it quickly. I don't want to let it accumulate in my mind. I try to think very simply. I was very stressed when I heard a rumor or news that the company would lay off its employees. It had been this way since 1996. We worried so much. For example, if the company laid-off 10 workers and my name was not on the list, then I felt relieved. I used to drink to celebrate, but these things happened again and again every six months. I dealt with that well. But when I was laid off, the standards were based on age. I could not avoid it. When I worked, sometimes I had to drink everyday, but I tried not to drink if it could be avoided. I tended to take care of my health well.

Unsuccessful Job-Hunting and Failing Health

The unemployed men interviewed in this study addressed their active job-searching activities through multidimensional methods such as visiting employment-assistance agencies, signing their names on employment lists in local

employment centers, and obtaining employment information from informal networks. As O'Loughlin and Watson (1997: 27) point out, the unemployed must make themselves acceptable to employers by changing those attributes which are perceived as undesirable through activities such as retraining or work experience. After experiencing the laborious and strenuous process of job-hunting, most respondents in the present study went through the process of retraining through various employment organizations. However, the competitive labor market cannot guarantee job security to the unemployed; instead, it causes greater frustration and anxiety, and even more so than prior to being unemployed.

One significant frustration associated with job-hunting is the prevalence of age-discrimination in the labor market. Almost every respondent over the age of 40 replied that it was nearly impossible to find a position in an area similar to their previous job. One option for unemployed who have limited skills is contracted daily employment found at construction sites. However, the dramatic downturn in South Korea's construction industry that occurred prior to the widespread economic crisis produced few job opportunities for the unemployed.

Another option the unemployed can pursue is to apply for work in low paying positions in the public sector. However, these positions are often reserved for individuals with disabilities, chronic diseases, and the elderly who do not have families.²⁴ Another problem with public sector work is that employees must reapply after three months of employment. Moreover, one is not guaranteed a job even when reapplying. In addition, temporary workers or subcontracted part-

²⁴ Some of the poor elderly said that they had difficulty in getting either the public work or Medicaid because they lived with adult children who were not able to financially support them. The fact that they live with adult children prevents them to receive the benefits.

timers in the secondary workforce before the economic crisis are now suffering desperately from unemployment. They are the working poor who had insecure jobs even prior to South Korea's economic crisis. If eligible, they can receive welfare benefits, which is far below the official poverty line of approximately \$900 per month.

With extremely limited social support, the last option the unemployed can seek is to approach civil organizations, which cater to the poor and unemployed. One worker at an organization in Seoul replied that they have had more than three times the number of visitors seeking jobs as compared to before the economic crisis. A former construction worker explained his struggle to find daily construction work:

3-5: I could not find construction work. With limited work supplies, people were not willing to share their work with me. I went out early in the morning to find work, but it was useless. When I came back home without finding any work, I was very frustrated. I could not believe the situation where there was no work. . A friend of mine immigrated to another country. Another friend of mine said that this new era requires people to have certificates of qualification in all areas. Only those who have that qualification can get a job. But how can a person with no education like me obtain that kind of qualification? So I realized that only capable people could survive in this society.

While unemployment itself is stressful enough, failing to find a job further contributes to the unemployed's detrimental health. Those who actively sought jobs and had experienced a number of rejections from potential employers tended to experience a variety of psychological symptoms, such as low levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. These symptoms in turn adversely affected the

individual's physical health, resulting in minor to severe health problems. One finding is that the unemployed feel fine when being laid-off, primarily due to the belief that they would soon find another job. However, after prolonged periods of job searching, these individuals began to feel frustrated and stressed from the harsh reality of a competitive labor market. Younger workers who were less aware that quitting their jobs would have repercussions on future job opportunities experienced more psychological problems than older workers. At the same time, older workers experienced greater frustration from age discrimination and from a growing awareness on their limited job opportunities. Their recognition of these obstacles lead them to drink and smoke heavily as well as bitterly blame themselves and society.

One respondent started to experience severe eye problems after repeatedly failing to find employment, which lead to severe economic deprivation. He finally visited a doctor who informed him that his eye problem must be caused by severe stress.

3-6: With my weak eyesight I applied for a handicap eligibility that included welfare benefits for lower income families. But I could not get it because I was not blind. I cannot even read with my eyeglasses. I have been amblyopic since 1997 or 1998. I've worn eyeglasses for three years. At that time, I did not know why I had weak eyesight. The doctor prescribed eyeglasses, but after three months of wearing the glasses, I could not see and had to increase the strength of my eyeglass prescription. I did this several times, but my eyesight did not improve. I also learned from the doctor that my eye problem could not be improved by changing eyeglasses. Now I do not change my glasses anymore and cannot read anything even with my glasses. I can barely see your face. The doctor said that severe stress caused my eye problem.

5-2. HEALTH MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

Health maintenance activities can be divided into two types: social integration and social control. Social integration and social networks may control or regulate individuals' behaviors or their thoughts and feelings in ways that generally promote health (House, Umberson and Landis 1989: 305). Durkheim's classic conception of social integration posited that social relationships such as marriage, parenthood, religious involvement, and employment promote health (e.g. reduce suicide) by providing a sense of meaning and purpose to life and by creating a set of constraints or controls on individual behavior (ibid: 305). Umberson (1987) posits both indirect and direct forms of social control on health behaviors. Indirect social control occurs through self-regulated conformity to social norms due, for example, to a sense of responsibility for others. Direct social control occurs as a result of others facilitating or directly imposing health-promoting behavior (e.g. controlling the types or amount of food available to an individual), or regulating or sanctioning health-damaging behavior such as smoking or excessive drinking (House, Umberson and Landis 1989: 305).

Health maintenance activities adopted by the unemployed varied according to the availability of resources. Those with relatively abundant resources tended to have better health while those with fewer or no resources tended to have fewer incentives to maintain their health. Poverty also restricts and prevents the necessary activities needed for health maintenance. In many cases, older respondents were more concerned about their health and, therefore, devoted themselves to more health maintenance activities such as running, climbing,

walking, visiting local clinics, and taking medication. In addition, the elderly who had available resources also had more opportunities for health maintenance. Reducing or stopping alcohol consumption was frequently cited by the older unemployed who had chronic diseases as a major step towards improving their health, combined with the fact that they were aware of the dangers related to drinking, including heart attacks and hypertension. At the same time, the active health maintenance activities adopted by the unemployed tended to improve their level of self-confidence and self-esteem, which are crucial when actively seeking employment.

Cutting Drinking and Smoking, and Exercising²⁵

Overcoming or minimizing bad habits can be categorized as behaviors controlled by social regulation, which is the constraint of an individual's behavior by another individual. Although many of the unemployed in this study voluntarily stopped drinking and smoking, especially among the older unemployed, the younger unemployed still relied upon some form of social control such as religion and pressure from family members. In particular, the unemployed's sense of responsibility to his family as a father figure was a primary reason for this change in behavior. A respondent aged 56, an early-retired former director of a Seoul

²⁵ As behaviors of health maintenance, these activities might be called social regulation. A social regulation perspective focuses on the constraint of an individual's behavior by another individual or social proscription. Both regulation and support may facilitate or directly promote health; however, support may be more responsible than regulation for the reduction of stress and adaptation to stress (House, Umberson, and Landis 1989: 306). Evidence suggests that social integration is associated with healthier behaviors and lifestyles, and that these behaviors and lifestyles partly explain the association between social integration with health (Berkman and Breslow 1983).

based bank, decided to pursue active health maintenance activities such as walking and hiking regularly, as well as reducing his alcohol consumption. As a result, he was relatively confident about his health. Compared to other respondents at his age, this respondent possessed plenty of resources, which made it possible for him to experience less financial stress and to maintain his health. The prestige he gained through his previous job also helped him to preserve a high level of self-esteem and self-confidence. He replied:

20-8: I have been exercising very hard. For example, I walk to the New Start Club for 40-45 minutes. I think that I am healthier than before I lost my job. I can drink less now and can manage my life without drinking. After learning how to use the computer, my eyes began to deteriorate. However, if I experience stress, I try to solve it quickly. I don't want to accumulate it in my mind. I think very simply. I was very stressed at work when I heard the rumor or news that the company would lay off its employees. It has been this way since 1996. We worried so much. For example, if the company laid off 10 workers and my name was not on the list, I would feel relieved. I used to drink to celebrate, but these things happened over and over again every six months. I dealt with that well, but when I was laid off, the standards were based on age. I could not avoid it. When I worked, I sometimes had to drink everyday, but I tried not to drink if it could be avoided. I have tended to take care of my health well. I have had a health check-up at work every year. Last year, I learned from the doctor that my right ear had problems and that I had high blood pressure. If this is all, then I must be very healthy.

Another respondent who had a middle class background also had a strong sense of self-control when it came to drinking and smoking:

31-2: I don't depend on alcohol and cigarettes to comfort myself psychologically. After my stroke, I had to quit smoking and drinking, too. But I have not yet overcome my problem in depending on them. I had pride in that I would not ruin my body and mind by succumbing to such things.

13-5: I used to calm my mind by drinking. I drank everyday except on Sunday, with my coworkers or alone. But I eventually reduced my drinking from seven bottles to a couple of cups of *Soju*.

In fact, his self-control on drinking and smoking was influenced by his adherence to responsibility for raising his son. As a single father to a young child, he felt a strong sense of responsibility as a parent. At the same time, his strong affiliation with a local unemployment activist group provided him with a high level of social interactions and self-identity.

Health Maintenance through Self- Diagnoses

Very few respondents reported that they had regular physical check ups. Unemployment causes many people to stop spending money on health care, which is considered a luxury by most low-income unemployed. Ironically, for this reason, these unemployed perceive themselves as having very few health problems and therefore believe that they are quite healthy unless they experience actual physical pain. In fact, most of them admitted that they do not know their health status as they have not visited a doctor for a medical check-up since losing their jobs. The health check-up they received at work was often the most recent and last one they had. However, some respondents who experienced illnesses even before their job loss tended to get regular examinations and followed their doctor's recommendations. Thus, perceptions of whether they have illnesses affect their health maintenance activities.

The health maintenance based on self-prescription was prevalent among the unemployed who have limited access to health care as compared to the employed who are often required to have yearly health examinations with doctors

and hospitals affiliated with their companies. Meanwhile, some unemployed are able to solve their immediate health problems by buying medicine from local drug stores based on their own diagnoses, which had been legal until recent years by South Korea's relatively lax health care system. This self-diagnosis practice, although possibly dangerous, is considered to be an effective and inexpensive way for many unemployed individuals to address their illnesses.

13-4: When I am sick, I buy drugs without going to the doctor. I take 10 kinds of medicines now. I have bad blood-circulation, which in turn causes other symptoms such as rashes on my body, headaches, eye pain, heart palpitations, the sensation of feeling cold, and lack of leg strength. The doctor could not tell me what my illness is. The doctor recommended that I exercise. But it did not work to reduce my pain as I lacked energy. My bad situation has caused my health to worsen.

13-4: The doctor gave me a prescription for my blood circulation problems last April. I purchased as much medicine as I could buy for one year and took one pack of medicine a day. But I won't be able to take that medicine after I run out because the revised medicine law does not allow me to purchase medicine without a doctor's prescription which costs a lot of money. I can't afford it anymore. Actually I'd spent \$12,000 in addition to my health insurance coverage for my illness but it was unable to cure my disease. The medicine prescribed by the doctor at the Seoul University Hospital was able to diminish my symptoms. I've had this disease for 4 years. After losing my job, it became worse. Due to blood clots caused by the rash on my hands, it is too hard for me to drive. One doctor said it is a modern disease caused by stress, pollution, etc. but he could not say how to deal with this. I went to 30 to 40 doctors but have yet to hear of a cure.

Rather than taking relatively expensive Western medicine, some of my respondents addressed their health problems by drinking fruit juices and taking herbs that they themselves cultivated and made through traditional methods. One respondent reported that he takes powder from ginkgo leaves that he gathered

from the beach located in a rural area, which is considered to be beneficial for reducing his allergies.

21-6: I have been taking red ginseng because I have cancer. I have had surgery several times. No one knows if I am ill. I feared that I would lose my job if the company knew about my illness. I got a fake health examination and submitted it. My doctor recommended the red ginseng which reduces the cancer size that grows between the bones. I have an examination every two years. I do not have any other illnesses except for cancer. I don't worry about my health.

2-31: We eat modestly with a few dishes such as kimchee, seaweed, and eggs. I eat very little. I've become accustomed to eating like this. For my health, I drink the wine made from pine tree leaves a couple of times a week. I also hike often and do Korean martial arts at a nearby park.

13-5: Instead, I am more concerned about eating food such as onions, green plum juice, and pine tree juice, which are good for relieving my illness. I ask my friends or relatives to bring me pine tree juice from the beach in the early summer and green plum juice from Jeju Island whenever they happen to go there.

Using Free Facilities

Those who do not live with their families, and who do not even have money to buy food required for curing their illness, have attempted to find free medical facilities provided within their communities. Those who lived in homeless shelters actively visited doctors who provided free medical care and were able to maintain their health better than those who lived at home. Three respondents residing in a homeless shelter received medical examinations and medicine from doctors who visited their shelter regularly. All three respondents showed their symptoms to the doctor and received moderate levels of treatment. Those who neither lived in the shelter nor had money to visit a doctor used free

local clinics and doctors affiliated with charity organizations. The availability of free treatment and unemployed individuals' active health maintenance activities were found to be strongly related. Despite the general agreement on South Koreans' unwillingness to seek mental health care, they did seek counseling for depression when care was available. One of my respondents was introduced to a doctor who offered free treatment and medicine:

30-7: I am taking medicine for my stomach pain which was caused by irregular eating. I used to skip meals which caused my stomach to become upset. Since the hospital van comes every Tuesday, I can get medicine and see the doctor. I also showed my teeth to the doctor. I also catch colds easily here due to washing myself with cold water. Hot water is provided only after 8 pm.

11-5: Everyday is so boring. I get up at 6:30. I am afraid of losing my mental faculties if I sleep much. So I go for a walk at that time. After lunch, I go to a free clinic, which has a medical machine for examinations. They provide free treatment to test to see if their machine works. I sit in the machine, which shakes my body to test for active blood circulation. I go there everyday and sit in it for one hour to supplement my limited medical treatment. It is good for me to be active and to do something with my time. Then I tend to go to an Asian chess center where sometimes the chess players invite me to go to lunch with them.

Another respondent who had access to a health care system provided by a humanitarian doctor also actively sought out health examinations and treatment.

11-8: When the temperature drops, my illness becomes worse. Thus, I take a bath everyday and take walks as often as possible. I often visit the doctor who provides free check ups.

Relying on Religious Spirits

Many of the unemployed perceived religion as a source of emotional support through either spiritual or interpersonal support from those who attended their church. Two respondents who became devoted to religion in order to escape

their pain and stress caused by unemployment and illness, reported that they gained higher levels of emotional comfort through their religious activities. Religion can be a means of social control which can cause one to quit smoking and drinking. Consequently, two respondents decided to be missionaries and subsequently attended religious schools. According to them, they survived their traumatic experiences by believing in God. One of the respondents also explained:

27-9: I live in a room with other two people who receive welfare. We pay 80,000 won a month for rent and 80,000 won other bills including water and electricity. We spend about 230,000 to 240,000 won a month for everything. I had to fight with the other two people often because they drank too much. They lost their jobs, wives, money, and homes due to drinking. They get together with other alcoholics and bring their bottles of alcohol home. I do not drink and dislike them drinking in the room we share. I tell them that they should not drink. My religious faith makes me feel guilty if I drink.

Engaging in a Variety of Hobbies

Engaging in a variety of hobbies was one way the unemployed attempted to concentrate on something other than their stressful experiences. These fun activities were perceived to be effective in helping them to overcome their bad feelings and stressful memories. Some of my respondents reported that they engaged in activities such as making artificial flowers, reading novels, going to the movies, cultivating herbs, fishing, as well as playing oriental chess and computer games. Although their material hardship did not allow them to pursue expensive stress-reducing activities, many of the unemployed tended to adopt a variety of hobbies to alleviate their stress that was related to job loss. One respondent, who was laid off from his factory where he had worked for ten years

after the economic crisis and who had feeling of betrayal, anger, and frustration after his unemployment, explained that he felt relaxed when making artificial flowers. He commented:

Everyday, I drank and cried alone and went to bed very late. I could not control my feelings of being betrayed by the factory where I had I worked. I was a really good worker and was promoted to supervisor in recognition for my hard-work. I never thought that the factory would fire me. It was a real shock. One day, after one month of abnormal living, I realized that it was Parents' Day. I could not afford to buy my mother flowers, so started to make artificial flowers using recycled paper and bows. Since it takes a long-time to make a single flower and requires a lot of labor, I was not reminded of my depression. As I made the flower, I was so happy by the fact that there was something that I could do for my mother who is always worrying about me, as well as by the ability to forget my stressful experiences for a while. So that night I did not have to drink to get to sleep.

In this case, concentrating on making crafts helped the respondent calm down his temper caused by his sudden layoff.

In sum, this chapter investigated the effect of unemployment on individuals' health and their health maintenance activities. This finding shows that the health effect of unemployment varies by social class, age and the reasons for unemployment.

CHAPTER 6 COPING AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Chapter 6 focuses on coping and survival strategies, which the unemployed use to combat their traumatic experiences as a result of unemployment. Voydanoff (1984: 66) defines coping as an active process in which the unemployed and their families take direct action by using social resources to deal with unemployment and its associated hardships. Reaching the coping stage takes quite a long time and varies from individual to individual. The desire and motivation to seek help from others and to develop rational ways of dealing with unemployment requires crossing the bridge between an old employed self and the recreation of a new self compatible with job loss and reemployment. Adopting this new self-concept does not come automatically, and sometimes, requires the strength and support of another. As a result, those individuals who have diverse social interactions are more able to cross this bridge.

Meanwhile, the unemployed individual's level of education and age as well as other demographic factors affect his coping and survival strategies. Previous studies reveal that older blue-collar workers are less vulnerable to layoffs than their younger colleagues due to the protection that seniority often affords. However, older workers are also more likely to face difficulties when finding reemployment after being laid off (Dunn, 1979). Similarly, more educated employees are less vulnerable to layoffs. Yet, there does not seem to be any major differences between highly and poorly educated workers in the amount of stress they suffer after being laid off (Kaufman, 1980).

Table 6-1: Coping Strategies as Reported by Respondents

Seeking Help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Assistance • Job Searching through Agencies and Networks • Homeless Shelter, Free Meal Programs • Seeking Emotional Help <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a Girlfriend Considering Remarriage Getting Counseling Rebuilding Relationships with Extended Families • Active Social Involvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drinking with Friends Going to Church Joining Groups and Organizations Participating in Family Gatherings
Emotional Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having Hope • Responsibilities • Facing Reality • Waiting for Opportunities • Trying to forget • Experiences, Learning Process • Personality Traits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being Proactive Having Good Relationships with People Being a Saint or Monk while Living in a Secular World Feeling Good about Helping Others Being Confident Thinking Positively and Being Optimistic
Survival Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserving money– Not Taking Buses, Finding Temporary Work, Using Others' Insurance Cards or Government funded clinics for the poor, Eating at home, Watching TV, Reading Newspapers • Maintaining Good Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking a walks, Visiting free clinics, Eating regularly and eating healthy food

	such as herbs, Maintaining personal hygiene (e.g., taking daily baths)
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The present study confirms that younger individuals who are less educated and are destitute have less opportunities to adopt effective ways to deal with the negative consequences of their unemployment than more educated, richer, and older individuals. Coping strategies developed and adopted by the respondents in this study include: 1) seeking help; 2) survival strategies; and 3) emotional strategies. As Table 6-1 summarizes, the unemployed in my study used a variety of coping and survival strategies.

6.1 SEEKING HELP

It is common for individuals in difficult situations to seek help from others around them. People are socialized to overcome their difficulties by seeking help from others. Pearlin and associates (1981: 340) have suggested that “being embedded in a network is only the first step toward having access to support; the final sep depends on the quality of the relations one is able to find within the network. The qualities that seem to be especially critical involve the exchange of

intimate communications and the presence of solidarity and trust.” Brown et al. (1975) singled out the lack of an intimate confiding relationship with a wife/husband or a girl/boyfriend as the most powerful negative “mediator’ between adverse events and psychiatric disturbance.

Consequently, it is not surprising to find that people who have access to information are able to positively cope with their difficulties compared to those with little information. Whether or not individuals are able to effectively overcome their problems also depends upon their socioeconomic status and class. Interviews with the unemployed in the present study show that individuals with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to avoid ill health and family disruption than those from a lower socioeconomic status. This is largely due to having financial resources and being in a higher social position, which often provides avenues to better opportunities in life.

Another important question regarding coping and survival strategies is who individuals turn to when they realized that they need help. Significant others are most likely to be among the first that the unemployed turns to for assistance. However, in my study, people of lower economic status sought alternative sources of help rather than depend upon their significant others, while people from the upper and middle class were more likely to depend upon their significant others. My respondents’ decision to seek help from their significant others depended on their rational evaluation of their significant others’ resources. This finding is linked to the degree to which the significant other was able to help the unemployed. The significant others of the lower class unemployed tended to be

less educated and more financially difficult than those of the upper and middle class unemployed. Thus, the unemployed individual's social networks influences the actions they take to seek help. Most of the unemployed in this study evaluated their social networks as an inappropriate source of help. For those who perceived little or no support from their significant others, public and community resources became very important sources for help.

The help-seeking activities the unemployed adopted in this study varied from financial assistance, which they sought through community resources and government agencies, to emotional assistance, which included mental counseling. When each individual began to seek help also varied from person to person. However, most began to actively seek help after experiencing an extended period of emotional suffering. Pursuing help-seeking activities arose from the unemployed individual's success in overcoming the emotional trauma caused by their unemployment and negative job-searching experiences.

Public Assistance

While most respondents in this study were more reluctant to ask for assistance from their relatives and friends, they were willing to seek help from government agencies, civil organizations, and community resources including church donations and self-help groups. This finding is in contrast to the widespread perception that strong family bonds and networks based on shared kinship, school, and regional backgrounds are prevalent in South Korea. There are several explanations for these findings. First, the nature of the lower socioeconomic status among the unemployed in this study might make it harder

for them to seek help from their friends and family members who are probably in similar situations. Second, seeking help from close friends and relatives is considered to be more shameful than asking help from a third party given that this person has fewer personal ties to the unemployed. Third, it is plausible that the unemployed may have asked their family members and relatives for help on several occasions prior to their unemployed status, such that it might be inconvenient to seek help from these same individuals again. Therefore, for my respondents, looking towards other sources of help such as public assistance and homeless facilities, rather than relying on their own networks, was considered more comfortable and appropriate. At the same time, Korea's difficult economic situation narrowed the variety of available resources within one's informal networks. For example, most respondents explained that their inability to find a job through their informal ties was linked to their friends' and family members' unemployed status and personal hardships.

One respondent who left home with his daughter after his business failed felt ashamed around his friends and family who had helped him several times in the past. Therefore, he desperately sought public sources of help. He replied:

2-3,4: A friend of mine came to see me and he was surprised with what I was living on. He suggested that I apply for public work benefits. So I applied for it but did not get it due to having a small family. Then it was impossible to live. I applied for it a second time but was told that the due date for applying passed two days ago. Thus, I asked for a favor from the official in the town office. He suggested that I apply for another type of benefit which is only given to elderly women who live alone. First, he got me to apply for welfare benefits for the poor which offers US\$150 and assistance for students of poor families. It was impossible for me to apply for the benefits because I felt ashamed to ask for work from those around me. And I had a lot debt and taxes to pay off.

Another respondent whose relatives, siblings, and friends were also in dire economic straits, and thus were unwilling to share their resources with him, explained to the researcher that he never sought help from people around him. Although he had experienced severe material hardship, he never asked his siblings for financial assistance. Instead, he was now faced with the difficulty of searching for public sources for help. He commented:

3-10: I received a loan earmarked for the low income class that allowed me to pay the deposit to rent my apartment. In the office of Dong, a worker introduced me to this center (Center for the Unemployed). I found public work through this center. I collected trash on the street. I heard from a friend of mine that there was public work cleaning up fluorescent lights in school. I implored him to tell me where I could go to get the job, but he did not tell me. So I went to the center for free employment of construction work which is sponsored by the Ministry of Labor. The center gave me a couple of days of work. Later, I found work here (the Seoul Center for the Unemployed) and got the job to clean up fluorescent lights in schools. I am not satisfied with my current life but I am O.K. with this organization. I feel very comfortable with the workers in the organization. I refrain from thinking about my future. When I think of it, I feel pressure in my chest. I want to just forget about that. Most job connection agencies inform us about sales work. Real office jobs are very rare to find. I went to East Ku-office, which also offers sales and driving work. Another way that I look for a job is to ask those around me. I know that it is hard for them to introduce me to a new position. Introducing means taking responsibility for the person. I have some coworkers who worked with me in a factory and some of them received promotions to managerial positions. I meet with them only a couple of times a year although we often call each other.

The unemployed in this study experienced desperation when seeking jobs and faced difficulties in finding the kind of jobs that they wanted. It is nearly impossible for them to find a job in any area during South Korea's economic crisis. This realization forced them to work in odd jobs such as street cleaning and trash collecting. However, many individuals who found odd jobs and public work

rarely stopped looking for the jobs they wanted. In particular, public work was considered by many respondents as only a temporary solution to escape their death-threatening financial hardship caused by their unemployed status, and in addition, as a means to fill their time while looking for a real job. Therefore, the stereotype that unemployed individuals who have public work tend to permanently keep their positions and do not look for other jobs was not supported in my study. Instead, the tendency for the unemployed to keep their benefits for longer periods of time depended upon the availability of jobs in the areas they sought in the labor market. Thus, blaming the victims of South Korea's socioeconomic crisis for relying on welfare benefits is inappropriate in this situation. For those who have even fewer resources and social support, public work opportunities are a life-saver. Many of my respondents said that their emotional suffering did not diminish until they found public work, which served as a means to revive their work skills and regulated their lifestyle, despite the fact that the jobs provided insufficient payment.

26-14: I think that working as a public worker is really good. If not, I would be in a dungeon. I am afraid of becoming like some of my friends who became totally destroyed both mentally and physically. They have thrown away their family, drink all day, and don't work at all.. They drink without money. They become totally drunk.

However, the middle class unemployed rarely expressed any positive impressions about public work, and rather, often left their jobs within a week. The strong work ethic and self-pride they gained from their previous positions would not allow them to endure the unpleasant feelings they experienced from public

work. Thus, unlike the lower class unemployed, the middle class unemployed were able to seek help from friends and family.

Seeking Emotional Support

The types of emotional help the unemployed seek are related to their perceptions of the interest of others who might want to hear about their concerns. These perceptions can be seen as a positive step in approaching others for social interaction. It is an emotionally advanced stage in terms of the individual's psychological well-being, especially compared to social avoidance, a common finding among the unemployed. The perception of interest in others is significant for the unemployed as it allows them to recover from broken relationships caused by unemployment and material hardship. It also allows them to reengage with others and ends their long social isolation. The perception of themselves as social beings might pave the way to finding a solution to their unemployed status. Activities toward seeking emotional support include trying to have girlfriends, considering remarriage in the case of divorced respondents, and receiving counseling with social workers in community organizations. Three respondents explored emotional help through counseling with social workers in community organizations, which they visited regularly to speak with other volunteers.

A 65-year-old respondent who had been divorced for quite some time, and who had previously attempted suicide, expressed his desire to have a girlfriend who could comfort and listen to him. Due to an emotional breakdown, he also had many counseling sessions with social workers working in the homeless

shelter where he resided. He thought that he could reduce his emotional pain by talking with others. He commented:

10-7: I received counseling from a social worker here because I strongly wanted to talk with people. The counseling helped me relieve my stress. On New Year's Day, all my children except for my youngest son called me. I was angry at my youngest son for not calling me and became distressed. This kind of stress disappeared with the counseling. I think those who have not experienced difficulties in their lives would not understand my feelings. I am responsible for my life so far and believe that we can deal with this difficulty by working hard despite the bad economic conditions. I feel so good talking with you right now.

10-7: I felt so hopeless that I lost my will to live and attempted to commit suicide. My past life was worthless but I have only one life. Then I began to think that I want to live to help others, to travel wherever I wanted to go, to eat whatever I wanted to have, and to meet a woman. I regained my self-confidence, saying to myself "I can do it." I will find a job this coming spring. I strongly desire to meet a friend, a spouse, or an old woman who would talk with me and provide courage for our life. It is too late to do that now. I miss my family so much, without them I would be very insensitive. It was wrong to not stay with my family. I am not sure how she is now but my heart is torn by recalling the past. I've never thought about remarrying. At my age and without money, it is too hard to marry again. I often wish I had a girlfriend my age who lives alone. I need someone who I could talk and travel with.

Active Participation in Social Activities

Despite their general reluctance to socialize, some of my respondents opted to look for inexpensive social activities such as going to church, joining organizations and religious groups, and using community resources to seek other unemployed individuals who had similar experiences. The unemployed from the upper and middle classes tended to continue socializing with others at least at some level even during their emotional suffering. In contrast, the lower class

unemployed tended to cut off their relationships with others right after losing their jobs. All of the middle class respondents in this study maintained their relationships with their friends and relatives despite feeling ashamed about their changed socioeconomic situation and the financial cost of participating in social gatherings.

However, some of the middle class unemployed actively used many of their relationships to solve their financial and emotional problems. College educated respondents who were actively involved in the union also tried hard to participate in as many social gatherings with their friends and coworkers as possible because they perceived that social involvement provided them with information on possible job openings and other opportunities. They pointed out that meeting people is the best way to survive when facing a difficult situation and to find a job as soon as possible. These social networks were able to help them emotionally and financially, despite the fact that the unemployed did not seek much material help from their social networks. Getting a job through friends and former business partners and coworkers was considered to be very effective. One respondent who was laid off from an engineering company tried to contact his friends and was able to receive financial help from them. He also attended a church with his family members to seek both emotional and financial assistance. Being unemployed gave him the opportunity to be closer with his old friends who for a long time could not reach him due to his unwillingness to attend alumni meetings. He said:

13-3: Due to my disability, I tended to avoid people and to not go to crowded places. Therefore, I used to avoid getting together with my

friends. But I should have contacted them to find a job and this made me feel uneasy. I moved from only getting together with colleagues in my company to friends from my old schools and from my hometown. I contacted them first and occasionally received phone calls from friends who heard about my job loss. I now try to see them often for job searching purposes and to figure out whether or not there are any jobs openings.

Of the four respondents who were divorced in my study, with two of them living alone, they each mentioned that their life would be better if there was someone who lived with them.

Unemployment did not change the social activities for some people who were already previously active in social organizations and were well aware of the importance of getting together with others. One respondent, a former engineer in a construction company, who had actively participated in labor union activities and civil organizations replied:

14-1: I loved to get together with my coworkers and have not experienced any animosity in my personal relationships. Despite not actively making friends, as long as I get to know someone, I enjoy getting together with others. Thus, people around me told me that they are so happy to talk with me. Some of them even praise my sense of humor. Since I did not have any relational problems with those around me, I was very popular among lots of people. The activity that relaxes me is drinking. I always meet people including my eight close friends. I have numerous friends.

Another respondent who was laid off from a construction company expressed his realization of the importance of human contact and active social involvement and its ability to help him find better opportunities for getting a job and achieving his personal goals.

7-9: I do not think I am satisfied with my life. I do not feel happy now but I have lived too passively. I will try to live actively. That is what I learned from my company's closure. I want to change what I've done up to now within the company. My family is not happy with me these days. They worry about me. I feel so bad about the fact that I cannot provide the good

education for my children. Instead, what I have is enormous sense of emptiness as this life is really different from what I had planned.

A former bank director pointed out that he did not have to cut off any of his social activities upon becoming unemployed. He continued meeting his friends and joining social clubs.

20-3: I cannot stand spending my time at the park. That never gives me pleasure. Instead, I joined a new start club, a club for retired people from the Bank of Kukmin. I can get some new information from other members, for example, what you can do with your retirement benefits, what are good ways to utilize the money for starting a new business. If so, what kinds of business would be more profitable. Many people recommended a rental business. I spend time with them talking and exchanging information. I do not go there daily but at least three times a week.

Contrary to middle class unemployed individuals, those from the lower class did not perceive active social involvement as a way to solve their unemployment problems. Since social involvement requires material resources, those who face material hardship tended to avoid frequent interactions with others. Not only do the unemployed from the lower class avoid social gatherings, but they are also less likely to meet with their unemployed friends due to the emotional stress that their unemployed friends might ask them for financial assistance. Finally, the limited social networks that lower economic status unemployed have further impede any opportunities for social interactions. Most of the lower socioeconomic unemployed that I interviewed responded that they felt more comfortable with other unemployed people who could empathize with their situation and feelings than with employed individuals. Gathering with those who are in similar situations makes them feel less lonely and builds social

solidarity. The unemployed tended to cut off their old relationships right after becoming unemployed and make new relationships with those who are in the same situation. This is similar to the concept of role exit. Therefore, the unemployed individual's social involvement within their new relationships became more marginalized and limited given that their new relationships tended to include more unemployed and less economically stable individuals. As a result, the lower class unemployed individual's participation in more diverse and powerful social groups tended to be restricted, as compared to the social involvements the unemployed from the upper and middle classes engaged in.

One respondent who once ran his own suit shop, but went bankrupt and was later laid off from another job, said that after becoming unemployed he moved to a poor neighborhood where many of his neighbors were also unemployed, and thus, became close to them. He frequently drinks with his neighbors and no longer meets his old friends.

26-6: I have some friends living in the same neighborhood. I don't like to go around with people. I don't like to travel. I've never been to Jesu Island yet. When at home, I get together with my neighbors and drink with them. I drink four or five days a week. About two bottles a day. I don't care what time I drink. But I don't drink alone. In my neighborhood, there are so many unemployed people. I drink with them either in a pub or in the park. I am rarely at home, I always go out, but I don't meet old friends. When I ran my shop, they visited me very often and we got together sometimes. After I moved to this town, I avoided them. I tend to avoid them.

6.2 EMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Prolonged unemployment can lead to a variety of psychosocial health problems. The emotional strategies the unemployed adopted in order to deal with

their desperate situations included: 1) taking responsibility for satisfying their families' expectations; 2) facing the reality of a tight labor market; 3) accepting their situation as a learning process to find different job opportunities; 4) refraining from thinking too much about their miserable situation; and 5) relying upon inherent personality traits.

Responsibility

Korean society is still conservative in terms of gender differences and continues to maintain an unequal patriarchal relationship between men and women. Most Korean men are socialized to adhere to traditional men's roles such as respecting one's ancestors, taking care of one's parents, and making important decisions on family matters. Some mothers do not even allow their sons to enter the kitchen, reinforcing the concept that housework is a woman's duty. Men in Korea grow up seeing their sisters forfeiting the opportunity to attend college so that their brothers may do so. As adults, males are obligated to take care of their old parents and younger siblings. The reinforcement of a male dominant society affects men's familial relationships and work relations with female coworkers, which in turn reinforces their masculinity and authority. In general, Korean culture values submissiveness and obedience, which is contrasted with the virtue of being content with one's living conditions, however difficult they may be (Pang 2000: 7).

Ironically, the different gender socialization processes between women and men in South Korea contributes to men's feelings of responsibility for their family members. Positing both indirect and direct forms of social control of health

behaviors, Umberson (1987) forwards that indirect social control occurs through self-regulated conformity to social norms due, for example, to a sense of responsibility for adhering to health-promoting behavior.²⁶ Seven of my male informants mentioned that they wanted to fulfill their social roles as a father, son, and husband. These comments reveal that family not only provides the unemployed with emotional support, but also structures certain roles and responsibilities to each family member. Thus, unemployed males who are suddenly no longer in the family breadwinner are at risk of losing their familial authority. However, some of the unemployed males in my study took great effort to fulfill their father figure roles. Their motivation to perform this role, and to have more control over their lives, is linked to their job-seeking activities. At the same time, taking responsibility is an interactive endeavor, which requires both the father and other family members to provide mutual emotional and material support. The high expectations that family members have of the father also influences the responsibilities a father assumes in the family. Respondents who perceived a higher level of support from their family members were more likely to attempt to take responsibility for their family than those who perceived lower levels of support. An informant who perceived moderate levels of social support from his mother and mother-in-law stated:

1-4: My mother and wife told me that I had to rest. Actually after my driver's license was suspended, so it was impossible to sell vegetables anymore. If I had a driver's license, I could have worked. I stayed at home and rested for a while, but I did not feel comfortable with that. Thus I began to work as a part-time construction worker three days a week. I

²⁶ E.g. controlling the types or amount of food available to an individual, or regulating their self-damaging behavior such as smoking or excessive drinking.

thought at that time that I had to at least earn money for food and to maintain my health. I felt responsible as the breadwinner in my family. Aside from making money, I felt obligated to earn money for food. Actually I had bank loans, so I had to pay them back.

Those who do not have a spouse or other family members, except for an adult child, often relied on their children for emotion support. Their obligation to raise their children also helped them to keep a strong frame of mind. Two of my respondents who were divorced and had a child to support demonstrated a strong desire to raise their children. These two fathers said:

2-23: Sometimes, I could not sleep due to the anxiety that if I died, how would my daughter survive.

3-11: I want to live longer for my son. My only dream is to see how my son will grow up. My son told me that he would take care of me after he grows up. I told him I am so happy with what he told me. He is so young compared to my friends' children.

Ironically, the gender socialization differences between men and women in South Korea also contributed to the males' feelings of responsibility for their families. At the same time, Korean men are taught to refrain from revealing their thoughts and feelings to others. It is not common for a husband to feel obligated to share his thoughts and anxieties with his wife. Rather, they expect their wife to understand and recognize their problems through intuition. Wives are not allowed to ask such sensitive questions of their husbands. The rationale behind this tendency is that men are to assume all the family responsibilities and do not feel they can share unnecessary worries with family members. One college educated respondent, the oldest son in his family, explained:

7-3: Although society is rapidly changing towards gender equality, our homes are in reality still quite patriarchal. I have not talked much about

this with my wife. I thought that I had to fulfill my social duties prior to my duties at home. It was my responsibility to make a living for my family, not my wife's. I have not discussed this issue with my wife much. Later she began to work in order to supplement our family income. But I guess she understood our situation well. It was more difficult to get my parents and siblings to understand my situation.

For an adult son, they cannot confide in their parents about their personal matters and anxieties. Instead, the eldest son tends to pretend that he is fine:

7-3: They live in a rural area. I visit them at least 10 times a year, including all holidays and vacations. I did not talk about my situation, but they heard from the media and from my siblings. I told them I was fine and could deal with the situation very well. The only thing I could do was to comfort them because I did not want them to worry too much about me. On the other hand, I tried to end our conversation regarding my occupational status.

One young, unmarried respondent felt great responsibilities towards his parents who had great expectations of him. His parents had supported him throughout college and provided him with living expenses. After graduating, they worried about him being unemployed. As the eldest son in the family, he always felt obligated to meet his parent's expectations of him.

4-7: I tended to study well in my town. So my parents were not worried about me much until I graduated from college. Now they are concerned about me due to my unemployment. I do not talk about my problems, which could make them feel hurt. My parents did not know that I started smoking as a teenager. I've never told them that I had been beaten during my military service. I don't know how much alcohol I drank because I did not go home when I was drunk.

The eldest son's feelings of responsibility for his family and parents is very powerful as they are socialized to be independent, strong, and confident, and moreover, they perceive their primary duty as taking care of their other family members. At the same time, they feel uneasy and stressed when other family

members assume responsibility for providing financial support due to their unemployment. This behavior risks hurting the unemployed male's self-pride and feelings of responsibility.

Relatively older respondents are more likely to carry rigid notions of male responsibility. A 65-year-old respondent said:

13-2: Born as the eldest son in my family, I tend to be responsible and conservative. I studied traditional Chinese literature when I was young. My children describe me as a person who lives in ancient times.

The wife's entrance into the labor force due to her husband's unemployment status tends to hurt the husband's feelings as he strongly believes that providing for the family is his main duty as a father and primary breadwinner

14-7: We are barely able to live right now. My wife started to work at a small office. I feel so bad about my wife and kids. Every family member suffers now.

Emphasizing a Strong Work Ethic

Most Koreans value having a strong work ethic that is traditionally emphasized through Confucius philosophy which heavily influenced pre-industrial Korean society. Due to this tradition, older generations are more likely to emphasize having a strong work ethic, enduring long working hours, and being extremely thrifty. Unemployed respondents aged over 55 frequently expressed their beliefs in Korea's traditional work ethic, which led them to actively search for jobs after being laid off. At the same time, their feelings of indebtedness to others and family disruption did not negatively affect their self-perception and pride. They considered misfortune and bad economic conditions as major reasons

for their business failure, which allowed them to keep some measure of pride and self-confidence.

As for other respondents, those who became unemployed due to business failure were more likely to emphasize integrity and diligence. The reason they relied on these values derives from the social relationships they had built over a long period of time. That is, small business owners generally collect money to be invested in their business by working and saving very hard. Their experience as a business owner also gives them the opportunity to supervise other workers to whom they emphasize a strong work ethic. Despite being unemployed, these respondents continued to strongly believe in a strong work ethic and often considered their own behavior as setting an example. A former business owner of a small-scale furniture store, aged 59, said that he never gave up looking for a job despite a number of unpleasant experiences from companies due to his old age.

31-1: Although I put my information on the board in the job locator agency, the companies have not yet called me. The companies refuse to hire me due to my age and other qualifications. They are interested in persons under the age of 55, so I turned my attention to maintenance jobs in apartments and buildings. I cannot afford to live without working but if I contact companies which plan to hire new employees, I am told that they have already filled the positions. I felt so frustrated with the response. I feel like I have done nothing so far. I have applied to some jobs so many times. About 30 applications.

A former bank director explained that he has not stopped searching for a job since losing his job and has even taken courses to enhance his chances of finding a job.

20:2 I had worked very hard while at work. I am very industrious and diligent. I got into a car accident but did not skip my computer lessons. I did not feel good and my arm was broken but I did not want to be

hospitalized due to the computer class. Diligence and hard-working are my values. I teach my children these values.

Having a strong work ethic often contributes to high levels of self-control so that these respondents rarely abandoned their responsibilities and duties.

26-5: I make 600,000 won (US\$ 460) a month. I have worked for two years, but I have never been absent from work. I do not give up in the middle of my work. There is no reason for me to quit my job because of the workload. Even when making suits, I never let the customers complain about anything. I don't experience any difficulties in working. I follow what people ask me to do without complaint.

Recognizing Reality

Recognizing the reality of their situations is important for the unemployed and prevents them from blaming themselves for their unemployment. Although many of my respondents understood the impact of the economic crisis on their unemployment, they tended to express feelings of self-blame, saying that capable people can keep their jobs under any circumstances. Frequent social interactions were helpful in understanding the reality of their situations as a diverse set of social relationships provides a variety of information and perspectives. In turn, by being able to understand their circumstances within a social context aids the unemployed to appropriately pursue job-searching strategies. Also, being aware of the social causes of their unemployment has a less detrimental impact on an individual's mental health.

One respondent, aged 42, who was laid off from a restaurant where he worked as a chef, was able to point out the nature of the labor market in his area, cooking, such as that younger workers with fresh ideas and good skills are more

welcomed than older workers with outdated skills. His realization of this social reality helped him understand his difficulty in getting a position:

6-4: It is very hard to get a job in a restaurant anymore because women tend to fill restaurant positions. It was so rare to see a female chef in the past but it is very common now. Most of them possess a certificate in cooking; so more work experience in restaurants is not necessarily an advantage over having qualification. I think young cooks create and develop more diverse dishes than my generation did.

Understanding and having knowledge about society and the economy also helps the unemployed to seek more appropriate solutions to their unemployment. The unemployed who accepted this tended to adapt themselves to fit the new labor market and to seek appropriate sources for job opportunities. For these reasons, the highly educated had an advantage in using information they had obtained through various social interactions. One college-educated respondent became less depressed with his unemployment by making a concrete future plan through his knowledge of the social and economic situation in South Korea.

7-5: My experience in working in a foreign country, Libya, helped me extend the boundaries of my thinking. You can compare our country to another country and realize that this country is not that good. You can extend your business and social mind through these comparisons. I have learned a lot about society through meetings with those who work in different areas. I realized that I know very little and that there are a variety of ways to live. Since this society is governed by 5-10% of people, if I am in the group, I do not have to try to follow them. This thought really changed the way I live. I must not enter a company again. My company was one of the top ten business groups and closed, and this will happen to other companies. In 10 years, the situation will not have changed, I think. I will not live as I have lived for the last 10 years. I will do my own thing.

In some ways, recognizing the circumstances of their situations leads the unemployed to better define their goals and matching them with a realistic conception of society. Three respondents with less than a high school degree were

able to reestablish their goals and lowered their future expectations, which they could have hurt their self-esteem if these goals were not achieved.

15-2: I do not have anything planned. I could only think of finding a job in a small company while my wife considered finding something she could do at home. I did not expect to find the same salary I used to receive at my company; instead, I could find a job with 60% of my original salary. Contract workers' salaries are far lower and their labor conditions are bad too. We say, "The good days are all gone now."

24-9: I don't think that it is society's fault. It is strange that Koreans have a rooted notion that a person who graduates from college should have some type of job. If you lower your sights, then you can probably find a job. I regret that if I had just lowered my sights, I might have found a job. I was too concerned about others' opinions of me. I had a chance to work as a salesperson. I was really ashamed. If I changed my opinion about the job, I would not be where I am now. I thought that the sales job hurt my self-pride. But I have changed my mind since last year.

Despite their dire circumstances, many of the unemployed seem to have plans and hopes about the future, which are coping factors in giving them reasons for overcoming their problems and to feel less depressed. In the process of recovering from their psychological symptoms, many of my respondents talked about the realistic plans and dreams they were pursuing. Nine respondents, mostly from the middle class, had more refined plans about their future. Of these plans, some expressed that their children represent their hopes. This is very typical in Korea where adult children take care of their parents.

Forgetting the Past

Psychiatric treatments in South Korea are commonly labeled as inappropriate and irrational options and only to be sought when individuals have mental illnesses. The social image of those receiving mental health treatment is

still stigmatized. Alternatives to dealing with mental illness are perseverance and self-control. For Koreans, forgetting the past and talking with others can be healing. In this study, many of my respondents perceived forgetting as a effective means to cope with their mental stress and psychological instability. Without forgetting about their bad past experiences, it is impossible to set new goals and thus to achieve them. Rather than relying on the past, some of the unemployed perceived actively searching for solutions and alternatives as being rational behavior. Meeting friends often helped them forget their negative experiences.

7-8: Sometimes I lose my self-confidence when no one helps me. But I've never shared this feeling with others. I just try not to think about it again. If I am worried, I try to quickly find a solution to my worries and try not to think of my worries anymore, by getting together with my friends I am able to forget them.

23-4: I don't want to think of the past. I just think that I became unemployed due to the mistakes I made. I don't want to attribute reasons to the mistakes. I don't want to cling to my old position either. I see that the future is more important than the present because the way that I solve the problems I have now determines my future and what I am going to do to live. I don't worry because it does not help me to blame myself. I worry about the future, not about the past.

Personality Traits

Previous research suggests that certain personality characteristics also influence how people cope with job loss (Cohn, 1978). Leana and Feldman (1995) explain three personality variables: locus of control, Type-A personality, and self-esteem. Internal locus of control refers to a predisposition to view important events in one's life as being within one's control. By contrast, individuals with an external locus of control tend to see what happens to them as largely out of their

own hands. They believe that events in their lives are caused and directed by other people, chance events, luck, or random situational factors. A Type-A personality is aggressive, ambitious, and driven. Type-A personalities are willing to oppose others to get what they want. When placed in circumstances where they face many obstacles, they will keep plugging away rather than give up. Self-esteem refers to a personality predisposition to view oneself and one's abilities in a positive light. Qualities such as self-esteem and determination should help individuals be more resilient and self-reliant in the face of disappointment (Cohn, 1979:8).

While these types of personality traits are significant influences in terms of to what extent individuals are able to cope with unemployment, they are not independent of one's socioeconomic status. Highly educated and younger individuals are more likely to be ambitious and confident when facing life obstacles. The more social support an individual receives, the better they are able to confront unexpected events. Moreover, the more they are able to become involved in social activities and participate in civil organizations, the more they might look for help and solutions.

Introverted personalities deriving from lower levels of family support

It is not surprising that those who have outgoing personality traits are less likely to lose their jobs and more likely to reenter the workforce than those who have introverted personality traits. However, it is more significant to understand where introverted and extroverted personality traits originate from. The unemployed come from a variety of familial situations and socioeconomic

statuses. The sample in this study indicates that those who received very low levels of family support tended to have passive personalities, more so than those who received higher levels of family support. For example, those who do not have two parents tended to describe themselves as being pessimistic and introverted. Although these people have a college education and adequate skills, they experienced a great amount of stress from failing to find a job. Their stress frequently led to mental health problems.

One respondent aged 36 lived with his mother who bore him from an out-of-wedlock relationship with a married man and was distressed by this for a long time. His mother ran a tavern where women served male customers. Being raised in the tavern and hearing his mother describe her resentment towards his father led him to decide not to marry. Consequently, he had very few friends due to his extremely introverted personality. When it comes to unemployment and failure in finding a job, he began to experience mental illnesses including depression and insomnia. He had to be treated by a psychiatrist for six months. He explained his experiences as the following:

24-4: I used to have very few friends throughout high school and college. I am not a very sociable person. I don't have anyone whom I might talk about anything. I was such an introverted person before coming back from the military. Military life changed me and taught me to express my ideas and thoughts. When I was an introvert, I was so sensitive and weak both physically and emotionally. My voice was like a girl's. I had always tried to be very rational and to not make any trouble. But society is ruled not by common sense but by nonsense. I try to remind myself that society is always like that.

Another respondent, aged 36, and who lived with his parents and one brother, had relational problems with his other family members. He thought that

his friends intentionally avoided meeting with him and did not want to get in touch with him. He said:

22-1: I am not good at adapting to new environments. I am my parents' youngest son and am introverted. After receiving inspiration from God, my personality changed and I became more sociable. I am an introverted person and could not adapt to new situations. It is fine with people who are below me, but not with those who are above me. I worked so hard but for a short time not enough to make good relationships with other people. I am not sociable.

Personal Traits That Affect Adjustment

Having Patience

Some people tend to have more patience than others. Older people tend to have more patience and tolerance with situations that are out of their control. One respondent described his personality regarding patience. Although he did not enter the labor force after college, he took his unemployment less seriously. His possession of higher amounts of patience prevented him from experiencing psychological problems.

4-6: I tend to be patient despite having a roommate who has so many problems. Because he does not realize what he is doing wrong, I shout at him loudly. He is not the cause of my stress but increases the level of my stress that is caused by other problems. I do not think too much. If I have free time, I watch television, work on the computer, or read books, instead of doing complicated thinking. I tend to skip over the difficult parts when reading.

Being Proactive

In general, younger respondents with high levels of perceived support from their family members described their personality as being outgoing. A respondent who received a substantial amount of financial and emotional support

from his mother and wife described his personality as being proactive and outgoing all the time:

1-4: I am not used to being stressed. If I have trouble with someone, I drink and talk with the person and tell him what I think about him. I am not aggressive towards the person, but I tell him what I honestly feel about him and ask if he could change a little. Because I have solved my problems by directly confronting them, I have had good relationships with my coworkers and friends. However, if there is a stubborn person who never changes his bad behavior, I give up trying to persuade him and let him be. I do not think this kind of person could ever improve himself. This is my way of dealing with people around me. By dealing with others in this way, the people around me seem to trust me. My personality is similar to my mother's. She is always aggressive and outgoing and has good relationships with others. She adapts easily wherever she goes. I am almost like her.

Being Optimistic

Some of the respondents tended to interpret bad circumstances in a positive light. Having an optimistic perspective toward the world and their relationships helped them obtain psychological well-being. One respondent explained how he was able to positively interpret the situations he faced:

12-2: First, I felt betrayed by my coworkers who spread rumors that I did not work hard. Then, I was miserable and frustrated with my situation in which I could not find a job at my young age. But I am optimistic enough to realize that these difficulties can be a good learning experience for me on how to deal with similar future problems that may arise.

Individuals who experienced longer periods of financial hardship and pressure seemed to develop their own ways of dealing with their mental well-being. One method that many of them used was optimistic thinking and having a positive outlook about their lives. One respondent who had gone through a long

and dark period that included indebtedness to others and disruptions in his relationships caused by his business failure commented:

2-29: When my brothers asked me how I was doing, I said that I was now doing well. Then they laughed and said to me that you must have been in a difficult situation, we could see how difficult your situation was before. When I tell them that I am O.K. now, that word holds so many meanings. I now think that I won't accomplish anything by trying something new; so I try to be satisfied with my current life and be feel comfortable with it. That does not mean that I give up doing things, but it means that I negotiate with my current circumstances. If I think of getting something more out of this situation, I tend to forget my limited skills and boundaries. That is when I become greedy. I want to have more financial stability in my old age but there are many people who are in very difficult situations. I think the numbers will only increase. It will be better than the days that I've gone through though.

2-5: At first, it was so hard to manage my feelings of pride whenever I tried to work as a construction worker or janitor. It prevents me from adjusting to my altered circumstances. A little while later, I was able to adjust but I felt that I did not have to live like that. And much later, I was able to adjust to my changed circumstances and decided that I would do anything to live, but then I began to feel that it is too late to do something new.

Being Independent

Older respondents divorced or separated from their wives tried to cope with their feelings of loneliness and isolation by emphasizing their independence. These individuals received low degrees of social support from their family members and felt rejected and abandoned from their significant others. However, by internalizing their independence, they attempted to maintain their positive outlook about their present and future lives.

10-5: I do not want to depend on my children. I am still healthy and am capable of working. I do not wish to get any financial help from my children. During the holidays, my daughter gives me about \$100.

10-8: I am not inferior to others. I have self-confidence. I feel I have hope in the future. Life is short. I will live hard until I die.

6.3 SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Living expenses for each unemployed varied according to his previous standard living, family size, and personality. Ten out of 30 of my respondents mentioned that they suffered from financial difficulties while seven of these ten individuals faced dire situations while unemployed. These difficult circumstances also caused them to develop survival strategies, which helped them to better manage their lives, prevent starvation, and avoid homelessness. Those who experienced financial difficulties reported that they spent approximately \$250 a month including expenses for food, bills, and incidentals such as investments in their children. In addition to receiving welfare benefits, they also found temporary jobs such as day labor for construction work and cleaning work if available. For example, walking rather than taking public transportation also allowed them to save money on transportation and had the added benefit of maintaining their health.

2-30: I started my life with a few suitcases, so we did not have furniture and house appliances. Thus, I collected used items discarded by various homes. Once you are able to change your frame of mind, one doesn't mind using old items. Later it became O.K. with me. I even stopped caring about the used men's clothing I was wearing. With the economic crisis, I adapted to the new circumstances.

Finding Economical Ways to Live

Many of the unemployed from the lower class developed a variety of ways to live with less money. They neither ate out nor took the bus. If they had to meet friends, most of whom were also unemployed, they opted to gather in the park. In order to drink and eat lunch, one of them would collect money from everyone and buy food and alcohol at a nearby supermarket. Drinking was thought of as an effective way to warm their bodies during the winter, especially when working outdoors in temporary jobs. The types of entertainment that the unemployed and their families from the lower class enjoyed included watching television and listening to music from borrowed compact discs. Family vacations were also no longer allowed.

5-1: I drink a couple of bottles of Soju with my coworkers in the park where I work as a public worker. Drinking keeps me warm. And I eat a packet of instant noodle for lunch and walk home for 45 minutes.

One respondent who worked as a day laborer in construction lived very frugally in order to offset the instability of his construction work, which he could not depend upon on a daily basis. He had an extremely modest lifestyle and frugal spending habits which allowed him to save his money for buying necessities.

28-13: I save all the money I earn aside from paying my bills and buying food. I eat at home. I refrain from spending money because I make so little money. I love movies. That is the only thing I spend money on. I pay for rent, 160,000 won a month. I go to a movie every week. I try to watch all the new movies. I read books at the book store. I watch movies to have fun. Not for any other meaning, otherwise my life is so dull. I used to buy books, but now I don't. I read them in the book store. I love movie magazines and novels, also essays or current events.

Another respondent, aged 29 and with a college degree, received support from his parents who sent him food – rice and homemade side dishes – from his hometown which is two hours away from where he lives, He earns approximately \$150 a month from his occasional part-time work at home. He noted:

4-18: I am used to spending very little money. I have nothing but cigarettes to buy. My living expenses are always the same. If I have some money, I spend it on buying books. That is all.

Some people reduced their apartment or housing expenses while unemployed after they spent all their savings. One informant explained:

6-5: We have lived by reducing the deposit on our house from \$50,000 to \$25,000. Sometimes, if available, I have worked as a construction worker for a few days each month. My wife made little money working as a cashier in a store. The work is not available in the winter but it is not very hard to get a job if you have someone who works in construction. I can earn \$50 a day from this kind of work.

Those who had worked in a big company for quite sometime had several methods for compensating for being unemployed. A respondent with a college degree who had a managerial job in a big company for 25 years stated:

15-2: At first I cancelled a variety of insurance and savings, which accounted for \$13,000 and also cashed in my social security. With this money, I also had some retirement benefits, which became the basis of my family's survival. We did not have to reduce our spending too much because of the savings and retirement benefits. But it seems to me that our living standards have returned to what it was 6 years ago. We have reduced our expenses on entertainment, education, family vacations, eating out, social gatherings. We very seldom visit relatives as compared to before and have reduced our clothing expenses for the children. Actually we do not spend much on our kids now.

15-2: My retirement benefits have been used for the past three years so far but it is a big problem to live this way. Mental hardship has been greater than the financial hardship. I am so scared about how we will live and how

I will educate my kids with this income. We are going to run out of money soon, then how will we live?

Effective Management of Daily Life

After a period of emotional suffering, some of the unemployed in my study adjusted to their new life by developing personal ways of regulating their days towards a more stable and healthy schedule. A respondent who worked as a public worker described his daily routine as:

24-11: I wake up at 7 and read the newspaper, while eating breakfast. After taking a shower, I go to find public work and come back home at 6. After dinner, I read some books and pray to God and listen to music. I go to bed exactly between 11 and 12. I no longer have insomnia. I have also cut back my medication since last winter.

Use of Cell Phones

Single fathers developed distinct ways of solving the dual problems of financial hardship and child-care responsibilities. For unemployed single fathers, child-care hinders their active job-searching abilities and the possibility of finding a job in a variety of places as they need to be available for their children. One way they were able to make their work amenable with child-care was to communicate with their children through cell phones. While cell phone use among the unemployed who do not have a regular paycheck may seem a luxury in terms of their standard of living, however, it was considered by the unemployed as a less expensive way to take care of their children than paying someone to do so. A respondent explained his rationale for having a mobile phone:

3-11: I spend a lot on food more than \$200 a month. And pay a telephone bill of \$100 a month including a cellular phone and home phone. Due to my son being at home alone, I call him often when I am not at home. I also have a cellular phone to stay informed about job possibilities. I have asked lots of people to inform me about potential jobs.

CHAPTER 7 SOCIAL SUPPORT AND ITS EFFECT ON WELL-BEING

Chapter 7 examines the nature of social support that the unemployed received and its impact on their own and their family's well-being. Social support is defined in terms of resources that meet a person's needs, that is, social relationships through which an individual's needs are met (Jacobson 1986: 252).²⁷ The discussion starts with the nature of social support in Korea, focusing on its cultural transition from a traditional to modern society. Economic employment and the adoption of capitalism from the West changed traditional Korean culture, which had traditionally emphasized social networks and warm sentiments between people. Second, the chapter examines the types of social support that the unemployed received, including informal and formal social networks. Lastly, this chapter attempts to explore the effects of social support on the unemployed individual's overall well-being.

7.1 THE NATURE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IN KOREA

The nature of social support in Korea can be explained by two concepts: *Yeon* and *Chong*. According to Lim (1995), social relationships in Korean traditional society relies on emotional relationships based on individual networks (*Yeon*). Networks, *Yeon*, is distinguished from similar Western notions of

²⁷ Jacobson also points out that social relationships function not only to offer support but also as sources of stress in so far as they constitute demands which may tax an individual's capacity (cf. Croog 1970; Wellman 1981; Hammer 1981; Shinn et al. 1984).

particularism, mechanical solidarity, and primary relationships. *Yeon* is characterized by the tendency in which all social relationships are considered to be connections, whereby individuals accept their relationships by transferring the idea of *Yeon* to others. In addition, the concept of *Yeon* among Koreans is characterized by their tendency to understand *Yeon* relations through familism. Korean familism tends to regard all human relationships as an extension of father-son or brother relationships. Thus, all vertical relationships are considered to be father-son relationships while horizontal relationships are thought to be brother relationships.

Chong is said to be unique, warm sentiments between or among people, while promoting caring behaviors toward those one feels close to (Pang 2000: 28). *Chong* might be something like true humanistic, loving, caring, and thoughtful behavior (Ibid. 28-29). It can occur between anyone and in any relationship. According to L. Kim (1991), *Chong* promotes the potential for deeper and richer relationships.

After the end of the late *Chosun* dynasty (the former name of Korea) when Western culture first influenced and shocked Koreans, Western culture was perceived by Koreans as being a power-based culture. Moreover, Korea's rapid industrialization after the 1960s changed Korean society from a traditional *Chong* culture to a Western power-based culture as the dominant cultural model among Koreans. Koreans came to believe that personal attainment of power, status, and education would replace the *Yeon* and *Chong* cultural traditions that emphasized kinship, regional similarities, and school ties. These changes led to a greater

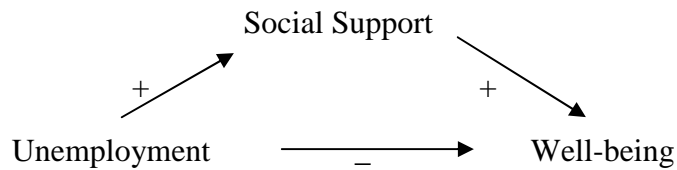
emphasis on education, which is an important step in improving one's social status and position. Those who were unable to improve their social position through education tended to engage in self-employed small businesses, which was another way to enhance one's social position. While changes from traditional to Western cultural practices have benefited Korea in helping the country to experience rapid economic and social development, such as improvements in economic status, quality of life, and education, it is also true that economic development placed too much emphasis on growth, and consequently, exacerbated the income gap between urban and rural areas, caused widespread poverty and imbalance between geographic regions, as well as increased social conflict and disorder.

7.2 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG THE UNEMPLOYED

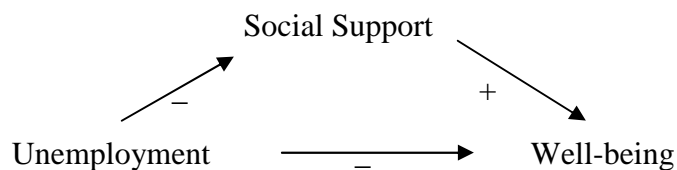
Imagine that a person becomes unemployed through various reasons such as layoffs, business failure, and plant-closings. Some might experience very negative emotional reactions while others might feel okay despite being unemployed. At this point, we should ask why unemployed individuals have different reactions toward similar experiences. One of the answers to this question would be the quality and quantity of social support the unemployed received. People with relatively high levels of social support are less likely to have psychological problems than those with lower levels of social support, as higher degrees of social support are associated with increases in one's ability to deal with life's stresses.

Figure 7-1: Effects of Social Support on Well-being

1. Support Mobilization



2. Support Destruction



1. Support Mobilization

Social support buffers either through its interaction with life events, or when it counteracts life events directly (Lin et al. 1985:250). In the counteracting situation, social support becomes mobilized as a result of the occurrence of an adverse condition (creating a positive association life events and social support). Lin and his associates (1979) and Wheaton (1983) seem to espouse this interpretation, which proposes that the buffering effect is present either: (1) as an interactive effect when the interaction between stressors and social support is significant; or (2) as a counteractive effect when stressors and social support are

positively associated, in which each of the two variables also directly affects mental health.

An individual's unexpected unemployment might be effectively adapted to with the help of family members and friends who sympathize with the person's unemployment and who actively try to help the person in finding reemployment and dealing with emotional adjustments. For example, after becoming unemployed, other family members, including the unemployed male's wife and adult children can find jobs to supplement the family income so that the unemployed can have some time to search for work and to receive retraining to broaden his chances for reemployment. Others might receive emotional support from their family and close friends so that they do not necessarily experience substantial loss of pride and self-confidence, which result from unemployment. In many cases, these types of social support, which immediately intervenes to prevent the negative consequences of unemployment and in turn positively influences stress adjustments associated with unemployment, is more often found among the unemployed with higher socioeconomic status. Those who had secure and high paying jobs are more likely to have a high quality of social support. People who became unemployed due to early retirement and layoffs are more likely to have social support as compared to those who became unemployed from a business failure and who never found new employment.

One respondent, aged 37, who became unemployed due to his company closing, worked as an engineer, was highly paid, and was promoted well. After his losing his job, his wife started working in a department store so that he did not

have to worry too much about their financial hardship. At the same time, he received financial and emotional assistance from his parents, siblings, and friends.

He commented:

8-10: When I lost my job due to the company closing, my parents who heard the news on television called me. They worried about me and gave me a lot of emotional comfort. I told them that it is okay for me to get another job. I have seven siblings. All of them finished college thanks to my parents who put a lot of effort into educating us by selling family land and properties. I have very good relationships with my siblings who collected some money and gave it to me when I lost my job. I also have received positive encouragement and love from them. I have many friends including high school and college friends who frequently met with me. After hearing the news about my unemployment, they visited me with some money and gave me much needed encouragement. They also told me that I should ask them for job information.

The above example shows evidence for the counteractive effects of social support on unemployment. Not only did this person have abundant coping strategies due to his higher socioeconomic status, but he also received assistance from his diverse social networks. His situation of unemployment actively intervened to mobilize social resources to prevent many of negative consequences of job-loss. He also received a great amount of social support by turning to a large number of people around him.

2. Support Destruction

The buffering effect is said to occur only if the simultaneous presence of life events and an absence of social support exert a detrimental effect on an individual's physical or mental health (Lin and Ensel 1989: 383). Lin et al (1985:248) argue that mental health is a state most successfully protected by

interactions with strong rather than weak ties and by homophilous (sharing similar characteristics) rather than heterophilous (dissimilar in characteristics) ties. It follows therefore that once an important life event is experienced, those receiving help from strong and homophilous ties should exhibit lower levels of depressive symptomatology than those who do not.

Negative consequences of unemployment, such as divorce or separation, have been experienced by the unemployed who received a very low level of social support in this study. Rather than receiving financial and emotional support from people close to them, family members start to blame the unemployed for losing their job and making it difficult for the family to financially survive. In this case, unemployment brings all kinds of disasters, including family disruption and homelessness. Stressful familial relationships in this case cause higher levels of psychological stress and financial hardship on the unemployed. The unemployed who have these experiences also tend to avoid various kinds of social involvement with their friends and relatives. They then try to make other kinds of social relationships after rejecting their previous relationships, which became so stressful that they prefer to not face them. In some cases it takes a long time to recover from these relationships, while in others the relationship never recovers. Those who had insecure and low paying jobs tended to have this type of social network, which deteriorated as a result of stressful life events, as their social support networks were not strong enough to overcome their problems. In most cases, poor families have very weak and vulnerable social ties and support so that when the head of the family becomes unemployed, the family structure dissolves.

This is based on a lower level of resilience to external stimuli, as the family was already living on the margins of society even before the head of the household became unemployed.

One respondent, who became unemployed due to business failure, experienced family disruption as a result of his unemployment. He had to take care of his children but it was a big burden due to financial hardships. He left home and lived alone in a motel for five years. He said:

11-1: My family refused to take care of me. They think that I my business failed due to my inability and laziness, and that I was not a responsible father and husband. So they distanced themselves from me. I got a divorce right after my business failure and have a married son and a daughter who study abroad. My children have refused to see me for 5 years. I have gone crazy from missing them. I argued with my wife because she did not like my policy that we should first pay back our debts rather than spend money on my family. I thought I must not harm others. My wife left me when I became ill. She was very biased against me. My wife tended to blame me for my family's unhappiness and material deprivation. She left me then. It was my fault not to keep my family. But I do not have any debts now. I paid all of them back. I cannot say that I was right. It was my mistake, I feel so regretful. I think it would be selfish of me if I should ask her why she did not understand me at the time. My son hangs up the phone whenever he hears my voice. I had expected him to take care of me, more so than the others, but it appears that he has cut off our father-son relationship. Though I am so distressed about it, I think I should change my attitude if he is unable to do so. I did not ask my wife to come back to me. I was mad at her for leaving me although I did not do anything wrong. I still think that way. My inner resentment caused my illness. I felt suffocated and full of anger.

11-4: Others are different from me. They seem to feel that it is a burden to meet with me because they have to spend money even when having a cup of coffee with me. There is a friend who walks in an opposite direction when he sees me at a distance. Due to feeling depressed about that, I would rather avoid them. I do not want to be a burden to them. They received a lot of my help in the past. I think they do not understand me.

They seem to think I am o.k. and do not know where I live. I'd never let them know where I live. It's shameful.

In another situation, the unemployed who do not have family members and relatives should be able to deal with their problems caused by unemployment themselves, and should not experience stressful relationships with their family and extended relatives. These people might feel an extreme sense of loneliness and emptiness resulting from a lack of social support. However, they also do not have to involve themselves in detrimental relationships and address the burden of taking financial support from their family. Those who do not receive moderate levels of social support are more likely to be from the lower class and to be less educated. Their insecure and low paying occupations in the past also make them feel financially and emotionally vulnerable. These people tend to have lower levels of self-esteem and self-confidence, leading them to easily abandon their future plans and aspirations for a better life. They also have greater chances of becoming homeless as they do not have a variety of social networks to ask for help when they become unemployed.

One respondent who did not have family members and nor a spouse received very little social support. In this case, social support did not much affect his well-being, although his lack of social support might have greatly affected his past experiences. However, his lack of social support in the face of his current unemployment affected his homeless state and residence in a homeless shelter. Although his unemployment did not extend to family disruption and did not impact his health, he could not ask anyone for help except for seeking public assistance.

30-3: I do not have a family. I had a sister but she died of cancer a long time ago. I have never felt bad for not I having a family. If you have money, it does not matter. You don't know how many families were disrupted because of this crisis. Since I lived in Seoul Station I visited my friends due to shame and ill health. I lost a lot of weight going from 70 kg to less than 60 kg.

6-6: I am not lonely at all. It is important to have a family if you want to live in this world. Life without close people is extremely difficult and makes one feel incapable. I had not felt this way until I had children because no one came to visit us to celebrate holidays and birthdays. That made me feel frustrated. I always emphasize to my children that you should make many friends. For example, college graduates have rosy futures due to their social networks. I should have realized this earlier. I was so desolate with my situation in which I had no people to invite me except for 4 friends.

The buffering model states that unemployment has a very negative effect on the family's well-being and the unemployed by destroying most of the unemployed's social support networks, including relationships with people the unemployed were closest to who could no longer endure the pain and hardship. Rather than receiving support from others, the unemployed tended to be blamed for their circumstances. In these cases, many of the unemployed started to experience mental and physical illnesses.

7.3 TYPES OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

Caplan (1974) describes a support system as being comprised of formal and informal relationships and groups through which an individual receives the emotional, cognitive, and material support necessary to master stressful experiences. Jacobson (1986) explains three types of social support: emotional,

cognitive, and material support. Emotional support refers to behavior that fosters feelings of comfort and causes an individual to believe that he or she is admired, respected, and loved and that others are available to provide care and security. Cognitive support refers to information, knowledge, and/or advice that helps the individual to understand his or her world and to adjust to changes within it. Material support refers to goods and services that help to solve practical problems. Most other typologies of social support appear to be derivatives of this tripartite classification.²⁸

Social support also consists of informal and formal support systems. Informal support systems include relationships with one's spouse, parents, children, close friends and coworkers, and neighbors, while formal support systems includes social support from community organizations, religious organizations, and government agencies. Informal support systems are very important for an individual's well-being particularly in the face of unexpected life events such as job-loss and the death of a close person. People tend to use their social networks when they face problems in their lives; however, if it is not possible, they must look toward other sources of social support such as community resources. Informal support systems are based on close relationships. Although an individual might not receive new information from an informal support system, they are very useful in providing material and emotional support. According to House, Umberson and Landis (1989:304), networks of small size, strong ties, high density, high homogeneity, and low dispersion appear to be

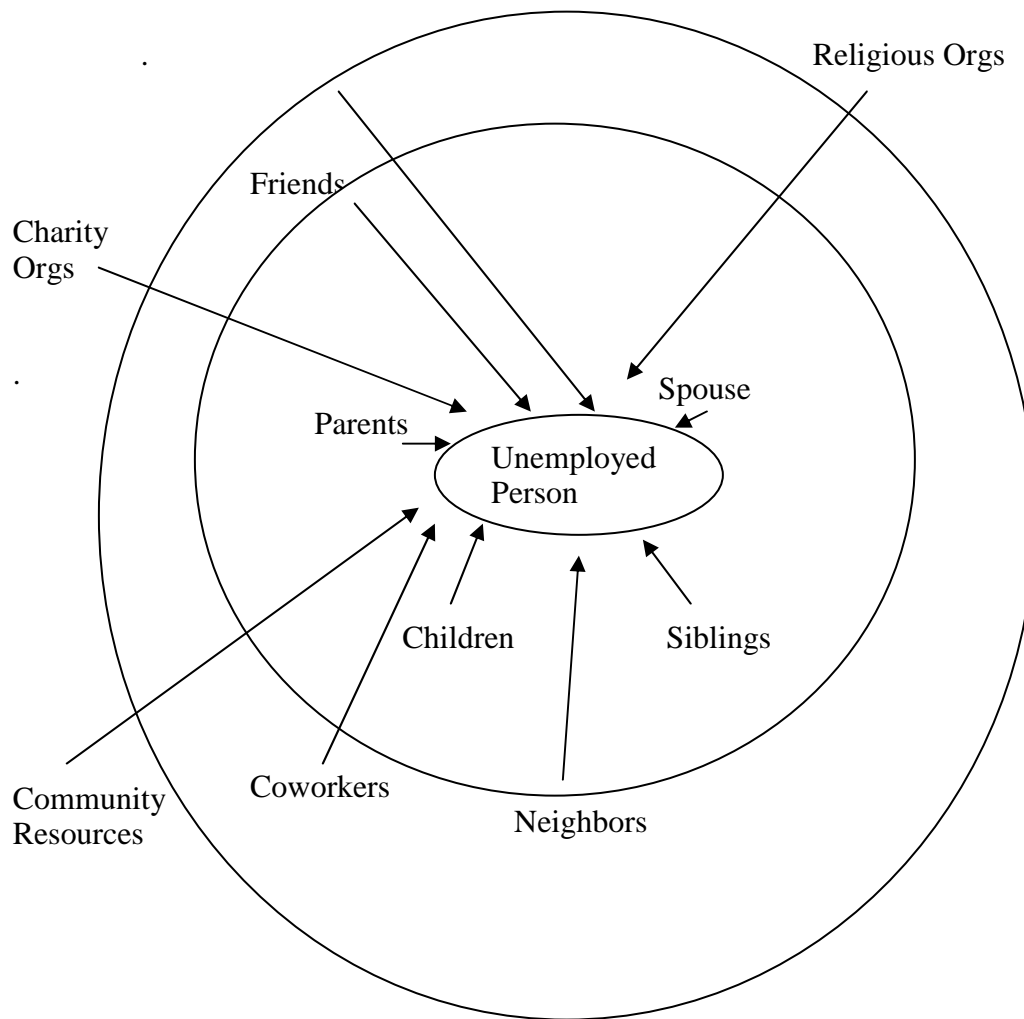
²⁸ (cf. Cobb 1976; Caplan 1979; Dimatteo and Hays 1981; House 1981; Gottlieb, 1981; Thoits 1982; Leavy 1983; Cohen and Wills 1985; House, Kahn, McLeod, and Williams 1985; Thoits 1985)

helpful in maintaining an individual's social identity, and hence, health and well-being when these are promoted by identity maintenance. This study also confirms that those without family and siblings tended to have lower levels of self-identity. Two respondents raised in foster care centers in the present study demonstrated high degrees of resignation and low levels of motivation in the face of their unemployment.

Granovetter (1973) suggests that strong ties play significant roles in the individual's sociopsychological activities, whereas weak ties are effective in linking the individual to other social circles or networks, which the strong ties are less able to provide. A formal support system not only provides material support including welfare and retirement benefits, but also offers cognitive support including valuable information regarding jobs. The unemployed who do not have strong informal support systems tend to look for a formal support system to deal with their material hardships.²⁹ The unemployed from the lower class tend to rely on a formal support system as compared to the unemployed from the upper and middle classes who are able to use informal support networks for help. House, Umberson and Landis also point out that changes in social roles and identities, and hence, health and well-being during such changes, is facilitated by larger networks with weaker ties, lower density, and greater social and cultural heterogeneity (Hirsch 1980, 1981; Phillips 1981; Strokes 1985; Strokes & Levin 1986; Walker et al 1977).

²⁹ The precursor for analyzing of the multidimensionality and specificity of support appears to have been Weiss's work (1973) on loneliness, in which he distinguished between different kinds of loneliness and in which he argued that compensatory relationships are neither substitutable nor interchangeable (i.e. friends do not take the place of a spouse and vice versa).

<Figure7-2> Maximum Layers of Social Support for the Unemployed



Social Support and Social Structure

1) Socioeconomic Status

The fact that socioeconomic status tends to be associated with differences in responsiveness to one's social environment and to socially significant opportunities more generally, suggests that the structures and processes of relationships may also vary systematically across socioeconomic status (SES) categories (Turner and Marino 1994:195). However, evidence that the structure and process of relationships, particularly received social support, varies by social class is sparse and contradictory. Some data have suggested that lower SES individuals tend to have social relationships of lesser quality (Belle 1982; Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend 1970). However, a large community study by Ensel (1986) reports no class differences in the appraisal of close relationships.

It might be assumed that lower class individuals have closer personal relationships with their family and friends given that their relationships are based less on material factors, and thus, would be more authentic and emotional than those found in upper and middle class individuals. However, the current study found that lower class individuals' social relationships are weak and vulnerable to external stimuli given that their financial difficulties serve as a barrier to maintaining and developing strong social support networks. As previously mentioned, not only do lower class individuals have fewer opportunities to marry and establish their own families, but they also have the burden of taking care of their parents and younger siblings. The tendency for lower class individuals to

work in financially insecure jobs also hinders their ability to build long-term relationships with their friends. Moreover, their precarious financial situation frequently leads to divorce and separation between couples and to high levels of conflict with parents and siblings. Many of the lower class unemployed reported frequent avoidance of social involvement, such as not meeting old friends, and later, making new friends who share similar socioeconomic circumstances. As a result, their social relationships tend to be more marginalized and limited than before. Their weak social support networks, therefore, tend to be associated with higher levels of mental and physical health problems. One distinct characteristic of that the unemployed from the lower class in this study had in their social support networks was a strong reliance on public and official support through government agencies, community charity organizations, and religious groups.

Middle class individuals, who became unemployed from business failure, tended to have close relationships with their family members and relatives as well as friends. Their relatively secure, well-paying jobs allowed for mutually supportive relationships with their family members. Moreover, their moderate socioeconomic backgrounds allowed them to provide financial assistance to their parents and younger siblings. They also had more opportunities to get together with their relatives and friends. Their higher level of educational attainment also allowed them to have a wide range of friends from their high school, college, and post college relationships. Furthermore, many of their friends were able to provide at least temporarily material support if needed as well as psychological support in finding a job. The high levels of social support that the middle class

unemployed received from their informal relationships also let them to rely less on formal support networks through community resources and government agencies. Although some of them attempted public work, they did not stay in these jobs for very long.

In sum, social support that the unemployed received in this study shows that social class plays an important role in differentiating the quality and quantity of their social support.

2) Age

Studies on social support generally indicate a decline with age in the quantity and quality of available networks and resources (e.g. Fischer 1982). In contrast, findings on perceptions on appraisals of social support are quite inconsistent, with results indicating a decline in support across age (Zantra 1983), no age differences (Turner and Wood 1985; Turner and Noh 1988), and increases in support with increasing age (Lin et al 1986).

Interviews with unemployed men in the present study show a decline with age in social support due to three reasons: not having parents, the possibility that one's wife may pass away, and lower levels of support from their children. Financial and emotional support from parents was commonly found among the younger unemployed as most Korea parents, if they could afford it, provided unconditional support to their children until their demise. Thus, growing older means that children eventually become providers rather than receivers of support, assuming that they remain healthy. Parents from the upper and middle classes provide material support for their unmarried children who are unable to work,

which include paying their children's wedding and housing expenses. It is also commonplace in Korea for mothers to care for their grandchildren and to do housework if their daughters and daughter-in laws have jobs. For these reasons, the younger unemployed, in particular from the upper and middle classes, tend to receive a substantial amount of support from their parents. In contrast, the older unemployed are at greater risk of losing their parents, who represent potential providers of support.

Not only were the older unemployed at greater risk of losing their parents, but they were also more likely to be widowed. The older unemployed were less likely to have a surviving spouse or female partner than the younger unemployed. The younger unemployed also tended to live with their family members. In contrast, the older unemployed only saw their married, adult children on special occasions. At the same time, the decline among the younger generation in upholding the traditional social norm of respectfully caring for one's elders has caused a large imbalance in the exchange of support between the two generations. Many unemployed parents who had adult children complained about their children's economic dependence on them and not upholding traditional social norms. Parents also cited that they received very low levels of emotional support from their adult children.

Informal and Private Support Systems

Most people generally did not receive much help from their informal social networks. However, those who did not have many informal networks were

likely to strongly perceive the need for social support. Most people who lived with family members and had many relatives expressed that they rarely received help from them, and ironically, were more likely to feel stressed by the possibility of having an unpleasant relationship with them. It is possible that lower class individuals did not expect much help from their close friends and family, given that many of them were too poor to offer much support and were also in a similar financial situation. Meanwhile, those from the middle class reported that they received much material and emotional support from their informal networks. Thus, social class affects the amount and degree of social support one receives from social networks during stressful experiences.

Second, people with relatively diverse social networks do not receive much help from their networks, while those with very limited social networks suffer psychologically from the absence of social support. Although these individuals may not receive much, the existence of social support is essential to one's self-confidence and self-protection. Social support can be compared to air or water, which are essential to live but are rarely considered to be important by most people. Meanwhile, those who live without it are hardly able to survive due to feelings of emptiness and loneliness.

Spouse

Among the married unemployed, their wife's emotional and material support is the strongest and most important in terms of quality and quantity. The unemployed experience the least stress when receiving support from their wife, which stands in contrast to the emotional uneasiness they feel in receiving support

from their parents, siblings, and friends. Evidence from other studies suggests the importance of the sex composition of social networks, as women appear to give and receive more support, with benefits to others and costs as well as benefits to themselves (Belle 1982, Burda et al. 1984; Hays and Oxley 1986, Kessler and McLeod 1984; Reis et al 1985, Sarason et al. 1985). Being married usually defines a stable relationship – one in which normative expectations involve the giving and receiving of social support (Turner and Marino 1994: 195). These considerations are consistent with findings on marital status differences and the level of social support. This has led some researchers to employ marital status as a complete or a partial index of social support.³⁰ However, Turner and Marino (1994) point out that while the balance of evidence appears to support the widely-held assumption that married individuals enjoy higher levels of support than unmarried individuals, a clear conclusion on the matter requires additional evidence.³¹

Many unemployed husbands reported receiving support, trust, and love from their wives, which helped them maintain their self-esteem. The emotional support and economic dependency that Korean wives bestowed on their husbands tended to help their unemployed husbands to deal with their difficult circumstances. However, long periods of unemployment often intensified marital conflict between husband and wife. The unemployed from the upper and middle

³⁰ E.g. Eaton 1978, Gore 1978, Lynch 1977, and Berkman and Syme 1979.

³¹ For example, based on a three-item index of perceived support, Ensel (1986) and colleagues (Lin, Dean, and Ensel 1986) reported highest levels of social support both married men and married women. Married men and women reported more confidants and perceived their social support resources as more adequate. However, contrary to findings of no marital differences in relation to emotional support emerged from studies of urban men (Stueve and Gerson 1977) and of nurses (Norbeck 1985).

classes experienced very little marital conflict from their unemployment. Since these couples tended to experience relatively little financial hardship, the spousal relationship between middle class couples tended to continue without crisis. A husband's previous social and economic status had significant influence on his marital relationship after becoming unemployed. The social positions that middle class men held was higher and more secure than those held by lower class men. This contributed to them being better able to cope with problems with their wives when facing unforeseen events. Overall, however, couples perceived that there was less stability in their relationship as compared when the husband was employed. Having a wife who was employed and who provided emotional support in the face of the husband's job loss helped him to effectively deal with many of problems caused by their unemployment. However, it was also possible that the wife's employment could negatively impact her unemployed husband's self-confidence.

One respondent who lost his job as an engineer in a big engineering company explained:

7-2: I had been employed in one of the biggest business groups in Korea. Most white-collar workers had never suspected that their companies would go bankrupt and that they would have to move to another company. Our lives were stable with pretty high salaries and an established future. Parents did not worry about their son's independent lives and families were maintained without big concerns. After a year of being unemployed, my wife started working. That meant we were able to live for one year without any income. With my wife's employment, we could maintain our living by reducing a little the amount we spent.

A middle class man received strong emotional support from his wife, and consequently, had a high level of self-esteem. The nature of the relationship between a husband and wife prior to the husband's unemployment also affects the degree of social support that a wife can give to her husband. This respondent addressed his relatively egalitarian and democratic relationship with his wife before his unemployment by sharing that he received a great deal of emotional and material support from his wife who found a job right after her husband lost his. He said:

14-3: I have been totally supported by my wife regardless of what I was doing. Although I come home late, she trusts that I am not doing anything wrong. My wife told me that it is fine with her if I come home late but asked me not to drink too much. She totally trusts me about whatever I do. I am the one who is responsible, so my wife trusts me. We live without fighting. Even when my wife fights with me, I do not fight with her.

In the case of the unemployed from the lower class, wives rarely provided financial support to their unemployed husbands as they could not find jobs due to their relatively limited skills and education. Lower class wives attempted to find jobs to supplement the family income. However, they usually found insecure jobs that tended to last for short periods of time. In a lower class family, the nature of spousal relationships was very authoritative and traditional, so that the wife's participation in the labor market caused a lot of household problems in terms of housework and child-care. However, many lower class men reported receiving strong emotional support from their wives except for the case that they became unemployed due to business failure. In terms of spousal relationships, job loss caused by business failure was the most detrimental and destructive such that

many of them experienced severe relationship problems with their wives and received very little emotional support from their spouse.

6-4: She does not complain to me about not making any money; rather, she sometimes earned \$20 a day by working as a cashier. To earn the money, she worked from 9:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.. She had not worked for 16 years so she was at first not confident when she started working. But after working as a public worker for 3 months, she regained her confidence and started to work as a cashier in a retail store.

13-5: To supplement family income after my unemployment, my wife had to work for public work for one year and is now jobless due to the regulation that public workers are allowed for only three months.

Ironically, some authoritative relationships between a wife and husband prevented the husband from being blamed and criticized. Some wives neither argued with nor criticized their husband's behavior as they did not have the authority and power to do so in their household. A husband's established role as the breadwinner in the family did not change much after the husband became unemployed as wives in low-income families rarely earned money for the family. For these women, they were not even allowed to complain to their husbands about their financial hardships. One respondent described the authoritarian relationship with his wife in this manner:

1-5: We rarely fight. I think we have one fight every six months. I do not fight a lot compared to my other friends because my wife always accepts my opinions. She follows my ways of living. My wife does not resist if I say something but I tend to listen to her if she points out something that I have not thought of before.

Parents

The relationship between parent and children is very unusual in Korea in the sense that parents care for their children in the deepest and broadest sense, but

at the same time, complain about their children's dependence on them. Korean parents do not always perceive their children as being devoted, but parents take care of their children as much as they can no matter how old the parents and their children are (Pang 2000:7).

For the unemployed from the upper and middle classes, parents were big supporters. If their sons become unemployed and experienced financial hardship, most parents with a moderate level of financial ability would immediately intervene to help their sons. In Korea, a parent's emotional and financial support for their children, at least among those in the upper and middle classes, was unconditional. The young unemployed from the upper and middle classes received abundant support from their parents while unemployed. However, the unemployed from the lower class received very little financial support from their parents, and moreover, received little to no emotional support.

Since most adult children received financial support from their parents for their education, most of them did not necessarily perceive it as being a burden to take their parents' help. One respondent, who had never entered the labor force since graduating from college, received financial support from his parents. He said:

4-1: My parents sent me \$200 a month with food such as rice and *Kimchi*. I supplemented my living expenses by working one or two days a month. I spent about \$300 a month paying for food, taxes, and buying cigarettes. My father delivered the food to me by driving from my hometown. I live near a bus terminal, so it is convenient for him to come to see me.

A 39-year-old respondent said that he received some money from his parents when he was unemployed.

7-3: They live in a rural area. I visit them at least 10 times a year, including all holidays and vacations. I did not talk about my situation, but they heard about it from the media and from my siblings. I told them I was fine and was dealing with the situation just fine. Only thing I could do was to comfort them because I did not want them to worry too much about me. On the other hand, I tried to end the conversation whenever it turned to my occupational status.

Of the two parents, many of the unemployed named their mother as being more emotionally supportive. The unemployed perceived the mother as being the giver of emotional support and comfort. Many mothers could not afford to send money to their unemployed adult children, but their fervent expression of concern and encouragement to their children was very effective for bolstering their unemployed sons' emotional well-being. One respondent aged 50 said:

15-6: My hometown is Taegu, where my mother and some of my brothers live. We only meet during the holidays but call each other often. My mother worries about my job loss and tends to call me very often. I told her "do not worry." I feel good when I talk with my mother on the phone.

Parental support

One important social norm in Korea is *Hyo*, which is a code of conduct. It obliges children to behave and speak respectfully to their parents. The social norm emphasizes that not only should children respect their parents, but they should also take care of their parents when parents reach old age. Although it is the first son's obligation to take care of his parents, other children cannot be excluded from following this code of conduct in Korea. With a limited number of welfare programs and social services available, the family still plays an important role for social integration and protection by reinforcing traditional social norms in modern Korea.

However, this social norm does not seem to be highly valued by the unemployed respondents in this study. My interviews indicate that none of my respondents' parents received material support from their children, while many unemployed children admitted to receiving financial support from their parents. No children responded that they provided financial assistance to their parents, either. In terms of emotional support, none of the fathers from the middle class received emotional support from their adult children, although they had fulfilling relationships with their young children. My findings indicated that there was a strong correlation between the father's relationship with his children and the father's self-evaluation. If the father felt that he received his children's respect and trust, then his self-esteem tended to be enhanced. However, if the opposite was true, then the father's self-esteem tended to decrease. Gallo (1982) points out that reciprocal relationships appear to promote health in contrast to relationships characterized by an uneven exchange.

When children are young, the father feels responsible for his children and attempts to control their negative emotional feelings, which might hinder them from living a normal life. Having children in itself affects a father's emotional stability and a low level of resignation. In this study, eight single fathers expressed their strong feelings of responsibility to their children and were aware of how important it was that they show self-confidence in front of their kids. A father who frequently interacted with his children was more likely to be able to face his problems than a father who had limited interaction with his children.

23-4: I have two sons, a 12th grader and an 8th grader. I feel so bad when I could not buy them necessary items. I used to encourage them to buy

something. I lost a lot of money from my business.... I talk with my children about 30 minutes a day. Our relationship is like that of friends. Most of time, I stay alone in my room. I don't talk to my parents much.

Fathers tend to admitted that they had problems with their adolescent children who tended to avoid spending time with their father and to ask for money for things that they wanted to have despite the fact that the father could not afford to. Adolescents were not mature enough to understand their father's predicament caused by unemployment, and moreover, to find a part-time job to supplement the family income. Fathers also expressed confronting and interfering more frequently with their adolescent children's activities. Before becoming unemployed, fathers rarely interfered with their children's affairs. However, being at home more often caused them to intervene in their children's matters. This became a primary reason for increased conflict between a father and his adolescent children.

Children

In general, fathers reported that they did not receive much social support from their adult children. What had changed between the two generations is that adult children neither uphold the social norm of *Hyo* nor feel responsible for their parents to the degree that their father's generation did. Rather, parents feel more guilt than their children in not being able to provide their children with financial stability and a good education. Many parents expressed the guilt they felt toward their children for being unemployed and bringing financial hardship upon the family. The generation gap between a father and his children regarding the traditional social norm has deepened over the years, especially after the country

began modernizing and industrializing and replaced Korean traditional values with Western individualism. However, the economic crisis exacerbated the generational conflict, for, during the economic recession, many family members were economically insecure and were more likely to ask for help from others. Consequently, neither side was met the each others' expectations. This becomes a main source of conflict between the two generations.

Unemployed fathers used the words, “yokes” or “creditors” to describe their adult children who took for granted that they would receive financial support from their parents, while they depicted themselves as “silent servants” to their children. One respondent, aged 55, retired early from his professional bank job, and expressed that how betrayed he felt by his college-aged children.

20-4: I have two sons. That's the problem. My generation got married so late. After college, we should enter for military service and get a job. Before marriage, we should save some money for an apartment. I was married at 30. My oldest son is 27, and second one is 25. They are still students. My two sons are students in medical school. It is very difficult to pay their tuition. For medical school students, it is very hard to get a part-time job because of the heavy course-load. There is not only tuition to pay, but also expenses for books, food, transportation, and clothes. I give them 100,000 won a week. I will spend all my savings on their tuition.

20-6: My children do not understand how much everything has changed due to my early retirement. I have told them that with only my retirement benefits, we cannot live well so they should reduce their spending. But I could not see any difference in their spending but more telephone fees than ever before. After investigating the reason for their higher telephone bills, I found out that one of my sons talked to his girl friend on the phone, spending 70,000 won a month. They don't know what has happened to us. Only parents worry about it. I am too disappointed with that. I've never thought that my son would make so many phone calls for such a trivial reason. I'd never done that to my parents. I thought if I paid my tuition as late as possible, I could help my parents. How could he make that many phone calls to his girlfriend despite having asked them to cut their

spending. From this, I realized, this is a generation gap, otherwise, it is my fault that I could not raise them right. I was so upset and angry, so I talked to him. But he did not listen to me. He does see what he has done is wrong. I think **children are yokes. Or they are creditors.** They think they deserve whatever they get from their parents. They think it is right for parents to give them money. I told my son that if I adopted you, you might feel thankful to me and try to pay back what I have given you so far. He changed a little after this conversation.

Another father, aged 59, who retired early from a state-owned cigarette company, used the metaphor of “silent servants” in describing the relationship between parents and children in contemporary Korean society.

21-8: I have three children, a daughter and two sons who are all married. They visit us once a week. My sons never give me any emotional support. They give me very little money and only on Father’s Day and my birthday. Rather, they come to take things from my house. But I’ve never asked them to give me material support. I give money to my son. I feel that there is a big generation gap. While young, I’d never overslept. My children sleep until noon or 1 pm without eating breakfast. At first, I was so angry but endured it. The relationship between parents and children has been changed a lot. Parents are **silent servants of their children.** I think that adult children should be independent if their parents provided adequate formal education and helped pay for their marriage and the place where they now live. Some parents might give living expenses and buy a house for their adult children, but I cannot afford for that. I cannot because I don’t have money.

One respondent, aged 65, unemployed from a failed business, lives in a homeless shelter after surviving a suicidal attempt. He had stayed for a while with his son and daughter-in-law since he lost his own house, and later, left his son’s house. He was not every comfortable with his daughter-in-law and none of his four children could provide him with financial help.

10-2: My son takes care of me very well, but I was not comfortable with my daughter-in-law. I speak very directly and it hurts her. I knew that I did

not have to do that, but could not change my habits. I left my son's house because I thought my daughter-in-law would be emotional hurt because of me. I got a phone call from my daughter-in-law who asked me to come back home. But she does not know I am here. ... I have two sons and two daughters. One of my daughters is a government official and another runs a business. My younger son is in the army and an older son has his own business. They do not know I live in a homeless shelter. I could not call and tell them. I do not want to depend on my children. I am still healthy and capable of working. I do not wish to get any financial help from my children. On holidays, my daughter gives me about \$100. I miss my family so much. It was wrong to not stay with my family.

Siblings

The existence of siblings itself, although there is no exchange of support between them, seems to help the unemployed feel more emotionally stable. Some of the unemployed who did not have siblings tended to feel more isolated and depressed after becoming unemployed. The unemployed received emotional support from their siblings, especially from older ones. In some cases, the geographical distance separating siblings affected frequent interaction and exchanges of support; that is, the unemployed who had siblings who lived nearby tended to have more interactions than the unemployed whose siblings lived far away. However, in some cases the unemployed whose siblings lived close by experienced more conflict than those whose siblings lived far away.

In general, it was rare for the unemployed to receive a great amount of support from their siblings and to have frequent interaction, especially if they were married and lived away from their siblings. Siblings tended to only meet during the holidays and for special family events. Most of the older brothers did not want to talk about their concerns to their younger siblings because of their

sense of shame. Moreover, they did not expect to receive any help from their younger siblings, while younger brothers did expect their older siblings to offer assistance. The age differences influenced the roles of caregiver and care-receiver. Younger siblings felt comfortable with asking for help and confiding in their older siblings, as the reverse was in general not acceptable.

21-9: I have three brothers and sisters. I am my parents' second son. We live independently but frequently visit each other because we live nearby. I do not tell my younger siblings about my problems. My lips do not open to speak about that with them. My older brother who lives in my hometown listens to me. I visit him four times a year but my older brother is too old to help me. He is 72 years old, incapable, and weak.

23-6: I would choose to be poor rather than I ask for help from my siblings. I cannot ask them to help me. They are financially better off than me. Have you seen anyone in Korea who is worse financially than me? An old saying says that you should look below you while living. We meet only in holidays.

Meanwhile, an individual's responsibility for supporting his family tends to affect their offer of social support to their siblings. The unmarried young unemployed were more likely to perceive emotional and material support from their siblings than the married older unemployed. On average, more unmarried people tend to offer help to their siblings than married people, who have their own family which they need to take care of. The limited quantity of resources held by each family did not allow them to offer a wide range of social support to their siblings.

22-3: The other siblings meet only on holidays and no one really likes to meet each other. After the memorial service on the holiday that pays tribute to one's ancestors my oldest brother's family rushed back to their home. The atmosphere was really cold and strange. No one talked to each other.

22-3: A long time ago I got help from my eldest brother to find a job. But now he does not care about me at all. It seems to me that he feels ashamed to introduce me to other people. He used to give me a little money, but he stopped that. When I was young, I could ask him to help me find a job, but I cannot do that now. I avoid talking to him directly about jobs because I am too old to ask for help. A few times, he has given me some information on job recruiting, which was not suitable to me. What the company wants of me was too high from what I actually have. I want my brother to introduce me to the person who hires workers, but he never does that. Even so, I don't feel bad about it. My brother lives in a different environment from me and he has a family to take care of. I try not to depend on him. I think that his personality and public image should be kept. I mean... I might ruin his good public image because I am not his proud brother. Any way, it is hard now to ask him for help.

22-3: My second brother was very close to me a long time ago. Now we are not. After the economic crisis, my family's economic situation became so bad. He complains that I do not financially contribute to my family. I don't have a place at home because I do not make any contributions. I have a good relationship with my third brother and get a lot of material help from him. He is poor but tries to give me some money but the others do not. My oldest brother dislikes receiving my calls. It makes it harder for me to ask for money from him. I was frugal while young and did not like to have candies and drinks. I have insomnia, which makes me drink more coffee. I am so sensitive.

22-3: I frequently have arguments with my brother at home. We are not very good. He does not understand my unemployed circumstances. He thinks that if I actively look for a job, it would not be very difficult for me to get a job. My mother agrees with my brother and complains about me. My father tends to be very silent at home. So I cannot go home and try to avoid conflict with my family. I might become a burden if I stay home during the daytime. I realized that after I grew up. Southern men are usually very reticent. My family is from Kyung Sang province. My father and brothers are very reticent. If they do not speak, others cannot speak. We just greet each other if we meet. I don't feel like we are a family. I don't feel that they are my brothers. I hate that. They never ask questions about me and never wonder how I live. I think that everybody feels that it is hard to live.

Younger unemployed from the middle class tend to receive a large amount of support from their unmarried and/or older siblings while the younger

unemployed from the lower class tend to have stressful relationships with their siblings. Material resources available to family members are associated with the degree of support they receive from their siblings. One respondent, aged 24 and middle class, commented:

29-14: My older brother works for a meat market that my uncle owns. Although he has a bachelor degree, he could not find a good job anywhere. He works from 5 am to 11 pm. He sleeps only four hours. My mother feels so bad that her college graduate son works at such a place. My brother thinks that he can learn how to run a store there and sees that working for the meat market has a better future than working in his own area. I have been working there for five years. He always helps me by giving me ideas and advice on my future. I talk with him a lot. We brothers are very close to each other and my older brother has taken care of me since I was young. When I was a high school student, he was doing his military service. When off-duty, he told me to talk to him and showed concern in my problems as I was going through adolescence and puberty. He gave me good suggestions and advice in response to my questions. That's why I love him. I waited for him when he came home everyday. We talked until 12:30. Sometimes, we listen to music together. He loves popular songs. We share our concerns and worries such as things at work. He talks about his troubles at work about how other people irritate him.

29-15: My brother gives me money. The money I earn is saved to pay for my college tuition at a later date. I do not touch my wages at all. I do not smoke, so I only spend money on lunch. My mother gives me money for lunch. I don't spend money on anything but lunch. The lunch costs between 2,500 and 4,000 won. Lunch in the cafeteria of the ku-office is cheaper than that in a restaurant. When I was at work, he did not give me money. But he used to give me money. While in the military, he used to give me 150,000 won. He told me that he did it because he could not help me with anything aside from giving me money.

Rather than getting support from their siblings, the unemployed frequently reported having relationships problems with their siblings regarding taking care of their parents and financial matters. Being married also complicates sibling relationships somewhat because it introduces new members into the family. This

leads to changes in each individual's priorities such as wanting to take care of their own children rather than their parents or their spouse's siblings and parents.

31-6: Our siblings are not very close and our relationship is not good. We disagree about how to care for my mother who is very old. Since my brother's living conditions are better and his wife works, my mother used to live with them. But my sister-in-law stopped wanting to live with my mother after her children grew up. One day she made called me and very rudely asked me to take my mother right away to my house. I felt upset and angry. So I asked my mother to stay with me and realized that she had abused my mother. Then my mother came to my house after one month and said she could not live there. And my brother became upset at my mother and me. One day, he drank heavily and came to my house, yelling at me. We have not visited each other in three years. I feel uneasy when I think of my brother. I prayed that we could repair the relationship with my brother's family. I paid for my brother's wedding and my wife had taken care of him a lot. I think I am a very unlucky man.

2-14: My brothers were angry at me because they lost some of their assets in helping me financially. Then we became distant as I frequently moved. Fortunately I had a person who helped me with food. She was a piano teacher and I met her at church. We would have married if we had had similar perspectives about life.

Younger siblings want to receive financial help from their older siblings if they think that their older siblings are financially better off than they are. In turn, older siblings feel the heavy burden of their younger siblings' dependency on them. The constant mutual expectations between younger and older siblings affect their relationship, and eventually lead to conflict and fights between them.

20-8: I have one brother and two sisters. All of them live in Seoul and we get together during the holidays. I live better than they do. They think that I am rich and want my help. In fact, my senior directors at the bank had some good years and earned a lot of money. The financial industries, however, have declined since 1974, when I arrived at the bank, due to the

oil shock. In 1992 when I became a director, the situation became worse than ever before.

Relatives

Very few respondents named their relatives as providing either material or emotional support for them. Three of the thirty respondents mentioned their relatives as being supportive of them; however, none of them claimed to have received a great deal of support from their relatives. Despite the fact that Korean society is mainly based on traditional kinship and kinship ties, very few people in this study received any help from their relatives when they were in dire straits. One respondent spoke of a niece who gave him emotional and material support.

11-6: I have a niece who has two children with physical problems and is very poor. She always seems optimistic and happy despite her material deprivation. I think she is happy because of her religion. Although her living situation is difficult, she still gave me \$20-\$30. I learned a lot from her. On New Year's Day, I went to church with her because I was impressed by her religious devotion.

Friends – “Friends come to you only when you are successful.”

Limited research indicates that help from friends and neighbors contributes to family stability and affects the unemployed individual's mental and physical health (Cobb and Kasl 1977; Gore 1977, 1978; Kasl and Cobb 1979). Friendships play an important role in meeting one's needs, especially when family members are not able to provide assistance. Friends can also substitute for family

members.³² Most middle class respondents commented that they saw no changes in their friendships due to their unemployed status and received emotional support from their friends. Three of the respondents even received material support. However, only a few of respondents from the lower class reported receiving emotional support from their friends.

31-3: We have a lot of difficulties to meet our living expenses every month. Some of my close friends have helped me because they believe that I can get back on my feet. I always pay back the things that I have gotten from anyone. For example, I might give them some advice on their business or I might drive and deliver some items for them. I do whatever I can to help them. I started getting help from my friends in 1998.

31-3: About three of my friends give me a lot of help. One of them, a high school friend, provides me emotional support. I am closer to my high school friends than to my college friends. I talk about my family problems with a couple of friends and talk about my business with my other friends. We meet a couple of times a month for dinner. I drink a couple of cups of *Soju* because I don't want to ruin our friendship.

Avoiding getting support from close people

One of the drawbacks in receiving social support from friends is that the recipient of the support, particularly if receiving financial support, feels indebted to the benefactor, thus causing the relationship to become unbalanced. Some of my informants from the lower class were reluctant to receive assistance from their friends even when they were in need, while those from the middle class did not care as much about feeling indebted to their friends. Many of them felt uneasy about receiving support from their friends because of their feelings of

³² However, Weiss's work (1973) on loneliness shows that compensatory relationships are neither substitutable nor interchangeable (i.e. friends do not take the place of a spouse and vice versa).

indebtedness and shame. Unlike the relationship with family members, keeping a balance in exchange of social support among friends is very important. Some of the informants were reluctant to receive assistance from their friends even when they needed it.

Receiving help from family members was thought of as being unconditional, while help from friends was seen as a kind of debt, which needed to be repaid some day. A 42-year-old man told me that he rejected his friend's offer to lend him money for opening a restaurant due to his feelings of indebtedness. He thought that receiving financial help from friends would harm their friendship. Another respondent, aged 65, said he felt so ashamed when his friend gave him some money, even though the friend put the money in his pocket without him knowing. For these individuals, keeping a balanced friendship was key. Thus, to receive more support than they were able to repay meant that their friendship would be problematic.³³ These findings show that most individuals in Korea share the belief that keeping a balance between friends is a key factor to maintaining their friendship. Consequently, it is difficult for the unemployed from the lower class to maintain friendships with close friends as their financial difficulties do not allow them to comfortably accept help from their friends.

Due to feelings of indebtedness, most of the unemployed tended to cut off their relationships with their close friends. Without a job, they could not afford to maintain regular relationships with their friends as social gatherings inevitably

³³ These feelings are very traditional in the sense that Koreans are afraid of losing friends because of financial exchanges. There is a saying in Korean that one does not lend money to one's close friends, as it damages the friendship. Culturally, most Koreans feel not comfortable when money becomes involved in a friendship.

require spending money. However, the strain between friends caused by an individual's unemployment is multilateral, rather than unilateral; that is, respondents reported that their employed friends often avoided meeting them. Meeting with friends reduces the number of subjects they can discuss as the unemployed no longer share the same daily experiences at work. At the same time, emotional support, which the two do not exchange, might burden both the receiver and the giver. Respondents from the lower class confirmed that neither they nor their friends were willing to meet if they had been unemployed for a while; in contrast, respondents from the middle class reported receiving at least some social support from their friends.

25-22: I don't ask for jobs from people around me. If someone introduces me to a job and it doesn't work out, I will feel indebted to the person who introduced me to the job.

30-3: My friends are very successful. I have received help from them but have failed many times. I received financial help from them before the economic crisis. However, I can only ask them to help me once. It is very hard beyond that. I was helped by several friends and received 2 million to 5 million won from each of them. But I did not use the money wisely. It was gone before I knew it. Later, I did not visit them and vice versa. We used to drink together, and although it was okay for them, I still care about how I appear in front of their wives and children. I meet with them only outside of their homes. Some of them seemed to be glad, while others changed a lot. After giving me money, their attitudes toward me changed a lot. But it is okay because I am the reason. I don't blame them at all. I lost much weight dropping from 70 kg to less than 60 kg.

One respondent addressed his friends' unwillingness to meet him because he lost his economic status:

31-4: What is different from before is that my friends keep in touch with me less often as compared to when I had my business. I think that they know of my business failure, so their attitude toward me has changed. I

used to buy meals and drinks. They contacted me very often at that time. I am not sure if I can afford to buy them things but they rarely call me anymore. Sometimes I feel that my pride is hurt and become disappointed with them. I think that these friends are just ones who want to drink with me. Good friends, you know, send back even a little echo when I send my friendship to them 70 percent of them changed.

Ending Friendships

According to the unemployed in this study, those from the lower class were more likely to curtail their relationships with friends than those from the upper and middle classes. Those from the lower class were emotionally vulnerable to many types of negative events including unemployment deriving from a difficult external environment. For lower class individuals, their job-loss due to layoffs is regarded as being similar to the business failures that upper and middle class unemployed individuals experienced. As previously mentioned, the unemployed from the lower class tend to temporarily or permanently cut off their relationships with friends and to find other types of social relationships, particularly with unemployed colleagues who are also marginalized and have little information and resources. Thus, the unemployed from the lower class also become marginalized and end up with even smaller social support networks than before. In contrast, the unemployed from the upper and middle classes tend to seek social activities and become less isolated from mainstream society.

Two middle class respondents commented:

7-4: I've never thought that my job at the company was hard. My philosophy is that an individual does not live alone. I tend to meet with those around me and to socialize with them. My weekdays are very full with meetings with coworkers, friends, and others that I have known

through work. I have relationships with a variety of people. My habit is to look for someone who needs help.

14-5: My relationships with my friends have not changed due to my unemployment. When I camped with my colleagues in front of the building of my company's business group my friends came over to encourage me and brought instant noodles and milk. I had a little trouble with my coworkers and bosses who looked on and only wished that others did something for them. I told them that in order to win this struggle, we must work together.

Three lower class respondents received very little support from their old friends and co-workers:

3-5: I do not meet those who I had worked with anymore. Some of them still work there. I implored them to give me, but they did not give me work. I had helped them a lot, but they are different now. So I thought, this is life. I have known them for more than 30 years. I met them when I was 15. They are very old friends. Without work, our meetings became meaningless. So all my friends have scattered.

6-2: When we work together in the same place, we were so close and shared everything together, but when I left, they were no longer my friends. They tended to pretend that they did not know me. I realized that I needed to have a lot of people around me to live in this society.

25-9: I see no one these days. I don't meet many friends either because they live comfortably with their families. I don't want to meet with them. We don't get in touch. It has taken ten years. I mind meeting them myself because I do not have a good job and it hurts my pride.

Some of my respondents who were in desperate situations, such as being ill and homeless, tended to receive financial support from their friends. Although they received money from their friends, they felt uneasy about accepting their help

11-1: I am desperate. I have been living in an inn paying \$100 a month in the summer and \$150 a month in the winter. I maintained this living arrangement with help from my friends around me. It has been too long to not earn any money. My close friends have given me financial help. They

put some money quickly in my pocket so as to not hurt my self-respect. Among others, a friend of mine who I knew in school and the army has helped me the most.

13-1: We ran out of our savings a long time ago. Now I live with back loans and support from my friends and church.

Feeling the Burden of Getting Together Due to Money

Why do the unemployed tend to cut off their relationships with others? Among many of reasons, their financial difficulties were a main obstacle to continue meeting with their friends. Material hardship adversely affects a person's social relationships as they require a moderate amount of time and money to pay for dinner and drinks. Some of the unemployed have perceived their lack of financial stability as being detrimental to having ordinary contact with their friends, although they are willing to meet with friends. They then become marginalized either from their friends or mainstream society. Their marginal status thus damages their well-being.

23-4: I cannot survive on the money I earn from public work. For example, with an empty pocket, I am not able to meet people and talk with them with a smile. Having dinner and drinking requires money. Meeting people provides us with information. About four out of ten people I meet can help me with something. The rest of them might share our past memories together. If I don't have money and I cannot pay for our drinks, it is o.k. for them to buy me a couple of drinks without any obligations. I have about ten friends who don't care of the notion of exchange with me. I can meet them twice a month, but even so, I feel a big burden when we get a lot of drinks and need to drink more. I start worrying about money. We can spend about 20,00 to 30,000 won on drinking a night, but I worry about buying rice and food to feed my family.

A middle class respondent with some financial resources expresses his confidence in meeting his friends:

20-7: I have a regular get-together with my friends once a month. I actively participate in meeting with my friends. We only spend a little money. Money does not matter to me when I meet my friends. I've never feel ashamed about my early retirement because I was not cut off due to corruption. And it happens to everybody in Korea. No shame, not at all. I am still confident with any type of work, which might be given to me.

Another middle class man who spent approximately 30,000 won (\$US 25) a day enjoyed meeting with his friends to play Oriental chess.

21-5: I meet a friend of mine who lives in Hanam, South of Korea. We meet in a central location between Seoul and Hanam. He is also retired. I don't meet him often now. I used to meet him three or four times a month. I have known him for 15 years. We play chess when we meet. We go to Cheonho-Dong where we spend a lot of money. We know each other very well without having to say anything.

A total of three respondents received emotional support from their girlfriends with whom they could talk to about their concerns, and more so than with other people who were close to them. However, their financial hardships became an obstacle to the relationship. One respondent commented:

3-10: I meet her sometimes, not often. I do not know where she lives. I call her or she calls me to meet. We do not have a meal together, we just have a cup of coffee on the street. Both of us are poor; thus we don't talk about the lives we have, but about the lives we will have in the future. But I don't want to be rich. I am so comfortable when I am with her. But the happiness does not last for long because shortly we have to leave for home. I have been seeing her for one year.

Neighbors

Urban lifestyles in modern societies rarely offer individuals many interactions with their neighbors. The unemployed who mostly resided in urban areas, such as Seoul, Incheon, and Wonju, did not talk much with their neighbors.

However, those who lived in the poorer neighborhoods where many were unemployed had closer interactions with their neighbors. Several respondents said that they frequently had drinks and played Oriental chess or Japanese card games with their neighbors. In the poorer neighborhoods, there were places for people to gather everyday. Gathering became a routine and spontaneous activity that they could share with those living in their neighborhood. The places became spaces where unemployed males and those with insecure jobs could meet to spend their time outside of their homes. Most of the women in the neighborhood were excluded from and ridiculed for attempting to enter this male space. Thus, women tended to gather inside their homes. This male space performed several functions: it was a playground for adult men, a socializing location, and a public agency that assisted them in finding job-connections. As a playground, many men spent their time playing various games and drinking together. Playing games attracted those who were interested in excitement as well as strangers who otherwise might not participate. Games were thus a very effective means to get to know strangers. The games also involved money, which was used to buy alcohol. To drink, someone had to buy drinks and food. The losers in each game were automatically obligated to buy drinks and lunch for the winners.

As a location for socializing, this male space allowed people to gather and interact socially. This social gathering site helped the unemployed to pass their time without feeling bored and isolated. The place also linked people with marginal and odd jobs. Men usually found construction and janitorial jobs through these informal relationships. They also felt pleasure from working with their

friends and possibly reduced their unpleasant feelings from job-searching. Neighbors introduced them to their supervisors and coworkers and even taught them appropriate manners to be necessary in the workforce. Going to the place is beneficial to the unemployed living in a poor neighborhood because it provides the opportunities to make friends, play games, and get jobs.

The unemployed from the upper and middle classes did not perceive their neighbors as being important social networks as they had other sources of social interaction including their friends, church, and relatives.

26-6: I have some friends living in the same neighborhood. I don't like to go around with people. I don't like to travel. I've never been to *Jesu*-island yet. While being at home, I get together with my neighbors and have drinks with them. I drink four or five days a week. About two bottles a day. I don't care what time I drink, but I don't drink alone. In my neighborhood, there are so many unemployed people. I drink with them either in a pub or in the park. I am rarely at home, I always go out. The neighbors who worked in construction work introduced me to a job making suits because I am from a different area. I had no idea about the field. When I moved to the poor neighborhood after my business failed, I could meet many neighbors who were carpenters and brick layers. I followed them.

11-4: I have known an old woman who sells snacks in a cart since last October. One day she asked me if I felt anxiety. Then she asked me to follow her. We went to a homeless shelter providing free lunch and dinner. She told me that you should eat well. I had only eaten one meal each day. She saved me. I eat twice a day and three times if I am lucky to meet my friends who buy me a meal.

Formal Support Systems

Formal support systems include community organizations, activist groups, government employment centers, homeless shelters, and religious organizations.

The unemployed tend to visit these organizations to find information about jobs and receive financial help. Most of the respondents in this study reported that they visited these organizations more than once, and many of them visited regularly. They also received more instrumental support, particularly job information, from these organizations than from their informal support networks. Lower class unemployed also admitted that their organizational connections were their only sources of support. In contrast, those from the middle class only sought job training and information from organizations such as government agencies for the unemployed. These formal support networks were effective in ameliorating the negative consequences of job loss, especially for low class unemployed individuals. Despite the assumption that formal organizations provide instrumental support to their members, many of my respondents cited receiving emotional support from the organizations through their informal relationships with staff members, volunteers, and other unemployed colleagues. In contrast to government agencies, non-government organizations serving the unemployed and poor families were considered to be more helpful and approachable. One respondent talked about his feelings toward the volunteers he met in a local unemployment center.

3-3: Whenever I see volunteers, I became so impressed by their sacrifice for others. I can't do that. I admire them for how they deal with that. I bear it in mind; thus I remind myself to be patient.

His sympathy towards the volunteers thus helped him to control his negative feelings about himself.

Another respondent who shared the same ideas and interests with his club members, and who studied ancient philosophy, was able to regain his self-identity, which he lost after his business failed. His emotional suffering and its impact on physical illnesses, such as heart attacks, diminished by becoming actively involved with other members, with whom he shared his ideas.

2-10: I am associated with an academic organization which studies Korean ancient history. We also call it “Institute for a New Culture.” I met with the members twice a month and forget my hardships when I am with them. I do not talk about my situation with them. We talk about our ideas about a new culture. I feel like I am mentally charged. I become more psychologically stable at the meetings. I feel like I have returned home after wandering for a long time.

2-11: We get together. It is worth it. With our talks, we confirm that we share the same ideas and perspectives. It makes me feel satisfied. You can feel your heart is empty after you talk about everything to somebody. The meeting is not like that. We talk about something that is not related to our lives, but we feel we are fulfilled after the talks.

2-11: Another association that I join is a Korean philosophy. I met the people when I was in a temple. We are interested in Oriental philosophies and have our own jobs. I meet these people once a month. After the meetings, I read books at home and feel that I am living. And I think that living is so hard if I have to do anything. My life has been so difficult, but my mental equilibrium returns after the meetings. I meet these people very often but I don’t meet other groups of people who were related to my previous business. I don’t feel comfortable with them.

Available Community Organizations in Korea

After the IMF bailout in 1998, social agencies quickly responded to South Korea’s high rates of unemployment. First, religious leaders, civil organizations, and other social activists attempted to raise funds and organized local chapters into nationwide centers to overcome unemployment. Among other groups, the

federation of democratic laborers, one of two labor union associations in South Korea, initiated those organizations, assisting fund-raising and program development as well as dispatching its staff to local organizations. Many scholars, social activists, union leaders, the unemployed, academics, and researchers started to have conferences on the mass unemployment caused by the economic crisis. With the funds raised nation-wide to rescue millions of unemployed, many local non-governmental organizations joined government agencies to transform their organizations into unemployment centers. The centers offered many services: a drop-in place for the unemployed to talk and receive free child care, skills exchange, seminars on job search and counseling, and advocacy for welfare problems. Individual members supported these political initiatives to expand the government's budget on welfare, including picketing, protests at city council meetings, and visits to congressional offices.

Fourteen respondents in this study participated in public work as a means to earn a living. These people had traumatic experiences in getting employment when searching for various job announcements and seeking public work opportunities. Despite the work limitations—the work ended after three months and the applicants must reapply after a three-month hiatus--most unemployed who sought public work experienced some level of satisfaction. Namely, the public work provided them with some income, which helped those who ran out of savings and had no one to provide them financial assistance. The nature of the work, namely, its relatively secure and short working hours and lower labor intensity, also made it possible for single fathers, who needed to pay close

attention to their children, to continue working as public workers. The merit of finding work near their home saved these individuals the expense of transportation and lunch, which they ate at home. Many respondents complained about the bad labor conditions after the economic crisis, which includes lower salaries and longer working hours. Despite the low wages that public work offers, respondents preferred public work which allowed them to have more free time for receiving additional training to qualify for better jobs. One respondent explained his rationale for staying with public work rather than getting a job in the labor market.

29-12: My father works for a dong-office. One day, the letter, which announces public work positions, was sent to my house. It was an office job working with computer. So I applied for a position in the dong-office. The person working there told me that it was no problem for me to get a job because I am young and know how to use computers. Then, I got a phone call from the office. I have been doing public work for 40 days. The work was much better than the work in the construction company, which required me to do physical labor, which easily tired me. Doing physical work prevented me from studying after work. Imagine... how can physical laborers study after work. Public work, despite the inconvenience of reapplying every three months, also gives the unemployed some time to look for real jobs without an feeling anxiety about their material hardship. Some respondents used the opportunity to prepare for certificates in foreign languages or computers, which one is frequently asked to present to employers.

29-13: I registered my name on the Incheon employment security center. Then I got two calls from the center which asked me to set up interviews with two companies. One of them I missed due to a bus accident and the other company did not hire workers. Also the companies were located too far away from my home. So I thought that it was not a good job. To work there, I have to spend three hours alone on commuting. It was also physical work. There were some phone calls from companies to which I sent my resume but most of work is physical work rather office jobs.

Usually physical work requires skills that one learns over a long period of time. Those jobs pay between 700,000 and 800,000 won. If it is 5 to 9 work, I am glad to do it. However, you need to go to work at 6:30 in the morning and return home at 8 pm. I don't think that would be a good option.

From a psychological perspective, public work helps the unemployed get together with other people who are in similar situations. Since the unemployed tended to avoid relationships with other people, including friends and coworkers, getting together with public workers or making new friends through work helped them enter into social support networks. Socializing with those who are in a similar situation allows them to talk about their problems without increasing their feelings of shame and hesitation. In fact, many respondents who have participated in public work mentioned their close relationships with coworkers who are willing to drink and chat after work. Many of the unemployed who looked for public work tended to have fewer social networks and lacked of family interactions. They aspired to make friends through a variety of opportunities, although most of the time they failed to do so. Civil organizations that linked the unemployed to public work also had programs that gathered and organized the unemployed who wanted to find ways to escape their unemployment. Participations in the programs required meeting regularly with other unemployed. The organization's staff were also more likely to help the unemployed feel a sense of collectivism and collaboration, which were related to their enhancement in self-esteem. Being empowered and organized around similar experiences positively affected their psychological well-being, especially for lower class individuals from poor neighborhoods who were more likely to suffer from a lack of formal

and informal networks. They felt more comfortable asking for help from community organizations than from their friends and family members to whom they might feel indebted even when talking about their problems.

The unemployed from the middle class were less likely to participate in activities provided by formal organizations because of the availability of relatively abundant social support and resources. However, middle class men who suffered from a lack of social support attempted to seek instrumental help from community organizations, while lower class men sought both instrumental and emotional supports. One respondent, aged 54, who lost his construction work and worked as a public worker commented:

3-6: I have been here since last February, doing public work. I was so happy with the way that people work together. I thought that making money is secondary to me. People in this center are really nice. Despite a rough world out there, I am so happy to get to know these people. I cannot leave these people. With workers and members here I went to visit a congressman in the ruling party to appeal to not reduce welfare budgets in Congress. We also went to many government organizations and councils of Seoul city to request that the budget for public work be expanded. I also participated in many congregations and demonstrations held by a variety of civil rights organizations.

3-8: Some members are not willing to participate in our activities for empowering the unemployed; instead, they only want to get public work. We have 30 members and 18 of them come to the meeting every month. We discuss how we should live, and what we should do for ourselves. We want to assure that we can be powerful by working together to get our rights of subsistence back. We do not have money for survival in this bad economic situation, but we can gather a small amount of money together and ask the government to support us. We want to be economically independent but it is impossible without the government's material support. But our power is too weak to get such support from the government.

3-9: We often get together, have drinks, and go to Karioke. I am so happy to go to rallies with them. I appreciate this organization which supports the unemployed. If we only worked for ourselves without such help from organizations, it would be impossible to obtain our rights.

One respondent, aged 65, survived with the help of a doctor who provided free meals as well as free medical care to local homeless people and the elderly poor:

11-5: The doctor who runs this free meal program for homeless people has given me free treatment and medicine for two months. He has a warm heart and welcomed me when I went to his clinic for a check up. He is pleased to help others.

Two respondents received counseling with social workers and volunteers in the community organizations for their psychological breakdowns. One of them, aged 30, commented:

28-5: While not working, I go to the employment center and stay there until 11 or 12 am. The center in Pucheon City opens at 5 am. I go there by 6:00 am to get a job. You cannot find work everyday because if the work is short, you should yield the work to others who did not work yesterday. We take turns working. Then I go home to have lunch and go to a bookstore to read magazines. On average, I go to bed at 10 pm. I also come here to get counseling. This agency not only connects people to jobs but also offers counseling for family problems. I received counseling here. This agency usually connects people to regular jobs, but I don't want to get such a job.

Some of the unemployed found that staying home with other family members itself was stressful due to pressure from their economic failures. Many adult children suffered from guilt in not being able to contribute to their family. This pressure reduced their self-esteem and self-confidence causing them to leave home. One respondent's experience in living in a homeless shelter and gaining

emotional support from shelter workers helped him recover from his psychological stress. A respondent who left his parents due to such pressures said:

12-4: I live in a shelter now. If I am not staying in this shelter, I should spend \$180 a week on room and food. Now there is no work even in construction. I heard that there would be work available after March. I feel good staying here because I do not have to spend money on that.

Religious Organizations

As one formal support system, religion influences the unemployed in many aspects including providing material and emotional support to them through religious faith as well as church resources and networks. First, the unemployed who attended church received material support for necessities and housing until they could find other sources of income. Some churches provided the homeless and the elderly free meals. Second, the unemployed could establish social networks with church attendants who might be willing to share job information as well as lend money to them. These social networks also provided emotional support and social interactions. Those who did not have family and close kinship relationships could get help through social networks through church. Those who received help from the church could be categorized into two different types: old attendees and new attendees. Old attendants refer to persons who had attended church for a long time and possessed strong religious faith. New attendees refer to persons who started attending church because of their increasing need for help.

Most people in this study admitted that they appreciated the help they gained from their church when they faced financial difficulties. They also

believed that emotional support from the church helped them emerge from their personal crisis. One of my respondents found a place to live and received food from those whom he met at church. However, once the unemployed overcame their difficulties and was able to manage their problems without assistance, they tended to stop attending church. The tendency was much higher when the unemployed who attended the church was already practicing another religion such as Buddhism. Two respondents reported separating from their religious organization, which had provided them with food and shelter, after they found a way to cope with their problems that were based on their unemployment.

On the other hand, those who had been church attendants before their unemployment tended to continue going to church as they did so for their religious faith rather than for needing immediate help. However, some of the respondents who had attended the church before their unemployment admitted to feeling uneasy about attending church after becoming unemployed due to shame and frustration, which was increased by other church members' cold attitudes toward them. Because of this, some respondents stopped attending church.

The Nature of Korean Belief Systems

Multi-religious backgrounds, ranging from shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity, have been studied in regards to their spiritual healing abilities toward anger and depression-related illnesses (Pang, 2000:5). Korean traditions emphasize a spiritual lifestyle that distances itself from pursuing material things, despite the fact that modern Korean society no longer promotes this as the norm. On the one hand, these values can be interpreted as believing in a

non-worldly life that is influenced by Buddhism, which refutes materialism and honors charity. On the other hand, it might be *Ch'enyom*, which is a transcendental solution for addressing worldly affairs through self-care. By accepting religious values such as spirituality and simplicity, some of the unemployed were able to control their negative emotional sentiments. Those who wanted emotional comfort from religion tended to believe in Buddhism while those who wanted social connections and material assistance tended to seek Christian churches. Given that Christian churches are open at all hours and were conveniently located near their homes the unemployed thought that they might benefit from attending church regardless of their previous religious beliefs. In particular, they sought material assistance and valuable information on jobs and community resources from church. Because these individuals only attended church to meet their immediate needs, such as getting food and shelter, they tended to stop attending church and ceased interacting with other church members after their needs were met. Some of them were concerned that others might discriminate against them because of their economic situation and unemployed status, while others simply did not feel comfortable with the new religion. It was surprising to find that some of my respondents had strong, negative feelings towards the Christian church, such as its corruption and greed. Respondents voiced their belief that the church only helped the unemployed as a means to recruiting more church attendants.

On the other hand, Buddhism emphasizes the values of non-possession and refraining oneself from material attachments. Therefore, some of the

unemployed thought that these religious norms were a good fit with their ascetic living conditions. In addition, since Buddhist temples are usually located in deep mountains and open to everybody, and didn't require people to attend religious rituals on a regular basis, some of my respondents tended to visit temples as an activity such as while mountain hiking, bowing in front of Buddha's statue, and finding a calm and quiet atmosphere to self-reflect. Many respondents confided that they gained a lot of emotional comfort from visiting temples. One 48 year-old respondent who was divorced and had relational problems with his extended family members due to his business failure that led to his family's economic hardship noted:

2-2: I needed a place to live with my daughter but could not afford to get one. So I went to a church. I asked a friend of mine in the church to lend me some money for finding a place and the friend ended his relations with me. Later, a preacher in the church got me a house which almost collapsed and the church paid a deposit of three months' rent for me. I moved in from the inn and brought in my stuff from my friend's antique shop. So I went to the church often. I think I live differently from others. I can describe myself as a monk with hair. I live secularly but do not live badly or without any principles of life. Though I receive financial welfare benefits, I always think I should maintain spiritual living standards. I do not want to violate social values. I do not go to church anymore. Instead, I often go to a temple where I used to live. I am strongly interested in Buddhism and have many friends who believe in it. I go to different temples because I love mountains. These days I am accustomed to going to Bong Un Temple in Sam Sung-dong. I stay there from 10 am to 3 pm on Sundays and feel so relaxed from the scents within the temple. Rather than depending on religion, I like its lessons and the monks whose ages are close to mine. It is very hard to say that I depend on Buddhism, but I love the temple atmosphere, which relieves my mind. I feel comfortable and easy there and the feeling lasts for a while.

Another respondent used temple visits as a means to control his negative emotions.

3-9: We also go to temples in Daekoo and Seoul. Temples provide food and accommodation. I feel relieved when I bow to the Buddha. I used to go there twice a month prior to this winter. I am impressed by the monks, usually women monks, who cook and serve for others all day. Then it makes it easy for me to control my mind.

Three respondents admitted that they recovered from their physical and psychological illnesses by believing in God. These three individuals followed different types of religion: Christianity, Catholicism, and the combination of Christianity, Catholicism, and Buddhism. Two of them suffered from psychological illnesses caused by repeated job-seeking failures and social isolation. These two respondents, who were in their thirties, said that they did not have many friends and felt it was difficult to make friends. Their unemployed experiences exacerbated their introverted personalities, which led to higher levels of depression and distress. The religions they started to believe in helped them to substantially control their negative feelings as well as to regain their self-confidence. One of them, who decided to become a Catholic monk, for these reasons commented:

24-3: I am Catholic and am preparing to become a Catholic monk. I have been Catholic since 1997 and decided to become a monk last summer. The reason is that I was naturally drawn...and I had nothing to do but become a monk.... I think about it constantly. I had been Christian before. I lost my religious faith in the military and after I became a civilian, I had to depend on religion. I received help from my religious faith to overcome pain and failure caused by my job-loss. It helped me accept failure. I had been mentally ill for six months having insomnia, depression, and suicidal impulses. I used to receive psychological therapy. I met the doctor once a week and took medication for seven months. The mental illness started in 1997, right before I quit my job. I had been hospitalized for two months and had had walk-in treatments for 5 months. The doctor recommended that I get an examination. I had much counseling and took a pill called Prosaic which is used to treat depression. I had severe insomnia and strong

attachments to the past. I have always regretted doing that. Seeing a doctor and depending on religious faith are very helpful to me. I was persuaded by my mother and other Catholics to believe in religion.

Another respondent addressed the nature of social control within the religion, which enabled him to quit drinking.

30-2: I quit drinking because of religious reasons. I felt much better after I stopped drinking. I used to drink heavily about two bottles of *Soju* everyday because I could not sleep without drinking. Living alone is very hard, and if you have worries which hinder you from sleeping, you need to drink. No one is with me.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

8.1 MAIN FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of unemployment on well-being based on the perceptions of individuals who lost their jobs during the economic crisis in South Korea. Focusing on individuals' narratives about themselves and their families, this study examined three main issues regarding unemployment: reactions to unemployment, experiences of unemployment, and coping strategies and social support of the unemployed. Understanding reactions to and experiences of unemployment is thought to contribute to theoretical development on the relationship between social support and well-being among the unemployed.

While unemployment is detrimental to well-being, this study assumed that the outcome could vary by socioeconomic status of the unemployed, which affects levels of social support and coping strategies among the unemployed. Therefore, this study attempted to examine the social support as a mediating or buffering factor between unemployment and negative outcomes of well-being among the unemployed.

A main finding of this study requires us to re-examine consequences of poverty and material hardship. Since the informants of this study are mainly from the middle or lower classes, it was possible to compare different perceptions on social support between the lower and middle classes. Although it should be more complicated, poverty, in relation to the degree of available resources and social

support, affected detrimental outcomes on well-being among the unemployed. The poor tended to be more often unemployed, less often married, and received less support from their family members and friends. Since individuals living in poverty have a great amount of vulnerability to any type of life event in general, job losses among them tend to destroy already-weakened resources and social networks as well as familial ties. The negative consequences of unemployment, such as family disruption and emotional and physical health problems, caused by material hardship were great among lower-class individuals and families. It was also apparent that middle class job-losers had higher levels of adaptabilities and resources to deal with the negative impacts of job losses, and had relatively fewer cases of family disruption and social avoidance, compared to their lower-class counterparts.

Not only the social class, but also reasons for unemployment were highly related to outcomes of unemployment on well-being. Those who experienced business failure were more likely to have family disruption, extreme material hardships, homelessness, broken relationships, and lower levels of social support. At the same time, layoffs experienced by lower-class individuals were associated with very detrimental health outcomes and behavioral changes. These individuals engaged in high consumption of alcohol and cigarettes, which affects negative health outcomes.

By social class, individuals perceived different types of social support and resources as their primary sources of material and emotional assistance. While middle-class individuals perceived their families as primary sources of social

support, lower-class individuals perceived public support systems, such as community and religious organizations, as primary sources of social support. Middle class unemployed individuals with relatively sufficient amount of resources and social support maintained stable lives, although they had reduced the size of spending, social activities, and their future plans since their job losses.

It is very critical that families and friends do not have the same meaning to everybody. Depending on their social class, available resources, age, and previous relations and contacts, primary groups of social relations around the unemployed tend to be perceived differently by different individuals. Thus, it is apparent that there is more complexity in explaining the nature of social support. The availability of community resources also varies from country to country; thus the fact that South Korea provides insufficient social support for the unemployed is a very critical problem, particularly for those from the lower class and those with low levels of informal support systems. As public support for the unemployed to deal with the emergency situation caused by job loss is lacking, the introduction of a systematic social safety net is highly needed in the country.

8.2 ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

By answering the research questions presented in the previous chapter, this section summarizes main findings of each chapter.

1. How does unemployment shape the meaning of work?

The first consequence of the economic crisis in South Korea was the rapid change in the labor market. South Korea, until the recent economic crisis, had

maintained low unemployment rates accompanied by the mutual agreement of lifetime employment between employers and employees in exchange for workers' loyalty to their companies. However, the incidence of mass unemployment and consequent labor market rigidity has reduced workers' conception of self-sacrifice and loyalty to their firms in South Korea. The high level of job insecurity has led some unemployed individuals feeling betrayal and mistrust towards firms not to seek reemployment and feel betrayed and mistrusted towards firms. Following this trend, the meaning of work perceived by Korean workers after the economic crisis has been narrowed significantly, resulting in workers' imagination of work as temporary and contingent, rather than as lifetime employment. This economic change led to the change in the meaning of work shared by workers in South Korea generally.

2. How do individuals perceive and react to their unemployment?

Chapter 3 explored the question on individuals' societal, emotional, and behavioral reactions to their unemployment. While previous studies have focused on emotional and behavioral reactions perceived by the unemployed, this paper additionally examines societal reactions, which include unemployed individuals' feelings about society, the government, and corporations. Since the respondents lost their jobs due to mainly structural changes in the labor market followed by economic crisis, their feelings of unemployment went beyond perceptions of themselves and their families. They were able to distinguish their lack of ability and competence from unavoidable and sudden influences of external environments as causes of their job losses, and to relate their unemployment to

broad public issues. They perceived that the current problem of unemployment would be permanent and structural, expressing extreme difficulties in finding jobs.

About society, the unemployed felt that only the skilled and highly educated could survive in the changed labor market, and that inequality became exacerbated because of the importance of social ties in obtaining a job. They felt betrayed and cheated by the government, which exaggerated economic growth and persuaded people into excessive consumption. In addition, the respondents thought that the government was the most responsible for the economic crisis which resulted mainly from its mismanagement of big firms in South Korea. The policies of unemployment introduced by the government after the economic crisis have not been seen as adequate and appropriate measures to support unemployed individuals and families, although some perceived that they have benefited from them.

While older individuals have not changed their work ethic as it relates to firms many middle class individuals in this study mentioned their skeptical views about working in companies and about reemployment. At the same time, high competition in the labor market has caused resignation and abandonment of efforts to get a secure reemployment among the unemployed, who experienced repeated failure in finding employment and thus negative psychological feelings. By social class, the unemployed from the middle class were more likely to perceive the structural factor of their job loss, and less likely to blame themselves for being unemployed than those from the lower class. Their evaluation of job

loss affected different levels of emotional feelings and development of coping and survival strategies. Consequently, positive and optimistic evaluations of their job loss, and of the labor market structure among the middle-class unemployed were inversely associated with psychological symptoms and negative behavioral changes.

Emotional reactions perceived by respondents are divided into two stages: early and prolonged. In the early stage, the unemployed experienced feelings of shock, emptiness, frustration, and betrayal while in the prolonged stage, they perceived feelings of self-blame, shame, hopelessness, lack of confidence, and resignation. In particular, experiencing negative emotional symptoms is strongly related to respondents' socioeconomic status and reasons for being unemployed. Respondents with a lower than high school education were more likely to feel negative emotions than respondents with a higher than high school education. The combination of age and education is another strong predictors of emotional reactions since older and less educated individuals held relatively higher levels of self-blame and loss of confidence. With respect to respondents' reasons for being unemployed, business failure was strongly related to higher levels of ill health and negative emotional feelings, probably because business failure involves such extreme material hardship and relational problems affecting lower levels social support received from social networks.

3. What happens to the individuals after losing their jobs?

1) What happens to the unemployed, and their families after job-loss?

Chapter 4 answers the question of what families have experienced after their main wage earners lost jobs. The first issue related to unemployment and the family was whether or not the existence of a family affects the overall level of well-being of the unemployed. The family, as a source of emotional support, which might mediate the negative consequences of unemployment, is found to be very crucial for the well-being of the unemployed. Despite the assumption that the existence of a family is beneficial for individuals' well-being, it is not necessarily true that the family always provides support to its members. Lower class respondents expressed their sense of burden and uneasiness about their family, rather than seeking emotional support their family members. For them, family relations became stressful, which prevented them from meeting their own needs. Thus, a function of family as a source of emotional support tends to depend upon material availability in the family. Although it can be argued that poor family members are closer and more sympathetic each other than their rich counterparts, my interviews with unemployed men show that among poor families unemployment created a lot of burden and stress for each member.

In general, material hardship was most widely experienced by families with the unemployed members. Most respondents, except for the college graduates who had worked for big companies, lived on between \$200 and \$500 a month, including government cash transfers or/and income from their public work. A total of seven respondents reported their experiences of extremely severe economic hardship after their job losses. The reality of the harsh atmosphere in

the labor market affected a severe material hardship of the unemployed and their families. It is also noteworthy that not only material hardship makes it harder for families with unemployed members to survive, but the experience also directly or indirectly leads to a variety of negative consequences, such as family disruption, mental and physical health problems among family members, and social isolation of the unemployed.

As one of the causes of family disruption, this paper discussed the changed relationship between a husband and wife in each household with an unemployed family head. The first reason for promoting the change is that the husband loses his economic role and sense of authority in the family. The Korean society, based on traditional gender roles, tends to exacerbate the conflict between wife and husband when the husband loses his job. In fact, high unemployment rates and loss of lifetime employment in the workforce affected the erosion of societal emphasis on the male role as family provider. At the same time, an increase in married women's participation in the labor force affected the weakening of male authority at home.

Applying a spatial theory, this paper argued that the clear distinction between private and public spaces encompasses a high level of inequality between women and men. Married women's active participation in the labor force can be explained as an effort to reduce the distance between public and private spaces. This study pointed to a new trend of married women's participation in low paying part time work in South Korea. However, this did not provide equal relationships between men and women, at a situation where women's regular work was

decreasing and assisting male bosses. The interviews conducted in the present study show that there is still a clear distinction between the private and public spheres in South Korea. Married women's participation in part time work has not necessarily supported women's higher social positions and relatively equal relationships with men at home. Both women and men considered women's part time work as temporary and supplemental such that they would quit their jobs if their husbands become employed. The fact that unemployed men feel uneasy to stay home in the daytime also supports this relationship.

2) How does job loss affect individuals' health?

Three models linking unemployment to health outcomes were explored in chapter 5. First, the combination of old age and business failure negatively affected individuals' health. Those aged over 50 reported a number of health problems, such as heart disease, cancer, hypertension, high blood pressure, and other various illnesses, while young respondents perceived few health problems unless they drank heavily. In particular, older unemployed informants who failed in businesses suffered from chronic illnesses such as heart attacks.

Second, harmful habits, such as heavy drinking and smoking, irregular eating and sleeping patterns, and avoidance of social activities, which individuals began to engage in after their job-loss, was strongly associated with negative health outcomes. In particular, drinking alcohol was heavily used as a means to appease stress and anxiety resulting from job loss among the unemployed. Virtually all respondents in this study, even those who did not drink at all before,

reported experiences of engaging in heavy drinking for some period of their job loss. Drinking for unpleasant reasons was frequently accompanied by other negative activities, such as skipping meals and sleeping less, which are detrimental to health. This study also found that rather than older respondents, the younger unemployed are more likely to engage in bad habits.

Third, failure in job seeking was strongly associated with detrimental health outcomes. Those who actively sought jobs and experienced a number of rejections from employers tended to have a variety of psychological symptoms, such as low levels of self-esteem and self-confidence, which in turn adversely affects physical health, resulting in minor to severe illnesses.

4. What coping and survival strategies do they adopt and develop to deal with their unemployment?

The present study confirms that less educated, poorer, and younger individuals are more likely to adopt effective ways to deal with negative consequences of their unemployment than more educated, richer, and older individuals. Coping strategies used by the respondents in this study include 1) seeking help, 2) survival strategies, and 3) emotional strategies.

My interviews with the unemployed indicate that individuals with a higher socioeconomic status are more likely to avoid ill-health and family disruption than individuals with a lower socioeconomic status because greater material resources and higher social positions often open the way to more life chances.

5. To what degree do the unemployed perceive that they receive emotional and material support from others and/or from society?

The present study found that lower class individuals' social relationships are very weak and vulnerable to many types of external stimuli because their material difficulty becomes a barrier to maintaining and developing higher levels of social support. Not only do lower class individuals have fewer chances to get married and to create their own family but they also are burdened by caring for old parents and younger siblings. The greater possibility among lower-class individuals of getting insecure jobs also hinders their continual and secure relationships with friends, and this insecurity frequently leads to divorce and separation between couples, and to more conflicts with parents and siblings.

Many of the lower class unemployed reported frequent avoidance of social contacts, meeting only with unemployed friends who were similarly situated with them. As a result, their social relationships become more marginalized and narrowed after unemployment. Thin layers of social support systems of the lower class unemployed, therefore, tend to lead to less adaptability to their unemployment status. One of salient characteristics of social support perceived by the lower class unemployed in this study was a strong reliance on public and formal support, including government agencies, community charity organizations, and religious groups, to meet their needs.

Middle class individuals, unless unemployed from business failure, tended to have close relationships with their family members and relatives as well as friends. Relatively secure and high-paying jobs had provided the middle class unemployed with mutually beneficial relationships with their family members.

They also had more chances to get together with relatives and friends. High levels of educational attainment produced relatively thick layers of social support systems, such as friends from high school to college; and many of these friends were able to give them material support, at least temporarily, and cognitive support in finding a job. Their high levels of social support received from informal relationships caused less reliance on formal types of support through community resources and government agencies. Although some of them attempted to obtain public work, their participation in such work did not last long.

In sum, social support perceived by the unemployed in this study shows that social class plays important roles in differentiating the quality of and quantity of social support received.

6. How does social support influence the well-being of the unemployed?

This study examines two models to explain the effect of social support on the well-being of the unemployed. The support mobilization model explains that one's unexpected unemployment would be dealt with effectively by help from family members and friends, who feel sympathy with the person's unemployment, and who try to help him with reemployment and emotional adjustment. Some people might receive a great deal of emotional support from their family and close friends, so that they can avoid feeling substantial levels of loss of self-pride and self-confidence which might result from their unemployment. In many cases, this type of social support, which immediately intervenes in minimizing the negative problems of unemployment, and has a great effect on stress adjustment strategies

of unemployed persons, is associated with higher socioeconomic status. Those who had secure and high paying jobs were more likely to have a high quality of social support. Individuals unemployed through retirement or layoff are more likely to have such social support than individuals unemployed from business failure or voluntary resignation.

The support destruction model addresses the possible consequence of unemployment of a family head of family disruption such as a divorce or separation from the person's spouse. Rather than the unemployed getting material and emotional support from people close to them, family members blame them for losing a job and for making it difficult for the family survive materially. Those who had insecure jobs tend to have this type of social network, which becomes destroyed by a stressful life event.

8.3 UNEMPLOYMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT

An overall intent of this study is to focus on differences rather than similarities in terms of the nature of and consequences of unemployment. Unemployment caused by economic crisis and/or recession should be dealt with differently from that occurring in the context of a normal economy, which provides for better labor market conditions to obtain employment than during an economic crisis. Economic restructuring adopted by the South Korean government during the economic crisis was aimed at promoting industries by allowing workers to receive lower wages and to be easily laid off. As a result, both the employed and unemployed feel dramatically unstable and stressful. A prolonged stage of unemployment also negatively affects families of the

unemployed, even for those who have sufficient amount of savings and property. Thus, the problem of unemployment during an economic recession should be considered more seriously than in a normal economy.

Not only the social structure, but also the unemployed themselves should be seen differently. Focusing on differences among the unemployed would provide us with more adequate and responsive policy alternatives. Unemployment does not affect human well-being in the same way. First, by social class, individuals perceive and react to their unemployment differently. The consequences of unemployment vary by social class, age, and reasons for being unemployed. Social class is a significant factor, which is associated with various consequences of unemployment. Lower class individuals are very vulnerable to the negative effects of unemployment because they have less resources and social support than middle class individuals. The material hardship caused by unemployment has varied impacts on lives of unemployed people and their families. The fact that individuals from the lower class tend to have insufficient social support systems makes them seek more public assistance and community resources. Unemployment policies aimed at structuring a variety of public resources, such as building social safety-nets for lower class families, are very crucial in a situation where many of lower class unemployed fathers become homeless. Considering possible consequences of fathers' homelessness on other family members, especially on young children, unemployment policies should be implemented to protect lower class families with children.

With respect to age, the older unemployed have lower levels of social support and higher levels of health problems and negative emotional reactions than the younger unemployed. The older in Korea suffer from a highly valued sense of parental responsibility towards their children, diminished care received from their children, and lower levels of welfare benefits for the elderly. They are in the position such that they feel they should give more to and receive less from either children or the government. Restructuring of the labor market after economic crisis also accelerated the level of job loss among the older unemployed through policies of early- retirement and collapse of lifetime employment.

Most previous studies which have investigated subjects such as unemployment resulting from company closings, or from layoffs have ignored the question of how different reasons for unemployment may affect well-being among the unemployed. Reasons for unemployment lead to different levels of emotional reactions, family disruptions, and health problems. The availability of social support also greatly varies for individuals out of work due to layoffs versus another reasons. This study found that unemployment resulting from business failure causes the most severe levels of negative consequences of unemployment, eventually leading to a loss of everything for the unemployed. While layoffs also leads to detrimental consequences for the unemployed, these impacts were different depending on the socioeconomic status of the unemployed. Compared to lower class individuals, middle class and highly educated individuals could more effectively deal with the life event, of unemployment.

Examination of perceptions of social support reveals more complexity than simplicity, according to assigned roles and expectations of the family of the unemployed and their socioeconomic status. As a father, son, and husband, the unemployed perceived different types of social support from their family members and different types of responsibilities. The person's education and previous work also affected the degree of formal support systems. The highly educated could maintain formal support more effectively and seek help more easily when they felt necessary. However, after being unemployed, the lower class begin to lose their social connections with other people and tended to replace them with more marginalized individuals such as other unemployed friends. The marginalization of the unemployed from the lower class should be taken into account more carefully.

8.4 FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study focused on mainly unemployed men, a comparison of the male unemployed to female unemployed is necessary to examine how the impacts of unemployment on individuals vary by gender. Since there has been a decrease in full-time and professional positions held by women, and an increase in married women's participation in part-time jobs after economic crisis in South Korea, the effect of unemployment on individual well-being by gender would provide a better understanding of reactions and experiences of the unemployed.

In addition, as an extended investigation on the relationship between a husband and wife in unemployed families, which was dealt with chapter 4 in this

study, interviews with wives of unemployed men would help us understand the topic more adequately. We might compare husbands' perception with wives' on spousal relationships and investigate how gender differences are affected in the face of unemployment, and how the relationship between spouses changes with respect to husbands' versus wives unemployment. This could give us an understanding of how women could have more egalitarian relationship with men both at home and in the public sphere.

Since the scope of this study did not extend beyond one country, the comparison of the unemployed in other Asia countries, which also experienced the economic crisis for last four years, would be helpful. Examining different pace of economic recovery between each country could reveal different levels of coping and survival strategies among the unemployed.

It is also necessary to evaluate the impact of unemployment policies including unemployment insurance, public work, job-creation, and job-connection activities. In the relation to this study, reevaluation of these policies would give us an opportunity to formulate new policy options, which would be more responsive to individuals in different social classes and situations.

Appendix A

Interview Guides

Part I includes the interview guides for 30 unemployed people, and Part II includes the interview guides for 10 government officials and public services providers in shelters and non-profit organizations for the unemployed.

Part I.

1. The first set of questions is personal information about the respondent, their family, age, marital status, the number of children, educational attainment, and previous income.

2. The questions would be a history of their life before the unemployment, during work careers, after the unemployment.

Would you describe your life history since the high school graduation?

When, how, where did you start your work career?

What work duties, social relationships with coworkers, bosses, friends had you involved at work?

How were your other lives including family relationships, marital status, extra activities, religious and social participations?

What reasons could be explained about you unemployment? What happened?

After unemployment, what changes in your life and social relationship happened?

What types of relational problems have you had since the unemployment?

3. Questions on Well-being

Through the life histories the respondents describe, their perceptions on well-being such as life satisfaction, happiness, physical and mental health, doctor

visits, any types of medications will be assessed. Examples of those questions are as follows;

What types of health problems have you gotten since the unemployment?

What kinds of psychological symptoms do you have?

What kinds of life problems do you have? Any material, physical, mental, and relational problems?

What problems are the most difficult for you to deal with?

4. Questions on Social Resources and Coping Strategies.

Life history approaches also involve the questions on various social relationships, social networks, social ties, and formal and informal activities to assess respondents' social resources and coping strategies.

What emotional and material support do you receive from your spouse?

Where do your extended families live?

How often, how long, do you meet them?

What kinds of relationships do you have with them?

What types of support (material or emotional) do you receive from them?

Where do your close friends live?

How often do you meet with them?

After unemployment, how have your relationships with your friends changed?

What kinds of activities do you participate in? Political and social service organizations and neighborhood.

5. Questions on the Current Economic Situation.

How do you describe your economic situation after job loss?

What types of financial support do you receive from others?

What types of spending have you reduced most after job loss?

What kinds of difficulties do you have due to the income reductions?

Part II.

1. The first set of questions includes general descriptions of their organizations, programs and services for the unemployed, service availability, eligibility for the services, and the number of service users. What types of the unemployed, in terms of age, sex, education, social class, levels of previous income, marital status, number of kids, and types of previous occupations, are served by the organizations?
2. The second set of questions is on how the services and number of users have changed after the economic crisis, what kinds of services are the most sought by the unemployed. What differences do you observe among the unemployed before and after the crisis? What social impacts do you observe after the crisis?
3. The third set of questions is on what types of problems and needs are told by the unemployed. What are the most serious problems facing the unemployed economically, emotionally, and socially? How do they describe behaviors of the unemployed such as social behaviors, attitudes, and help-seeking behaviors.
4. The fourth set of questions include what types of services are urgent to be developed, what are the long term and short-term policy needs, what weaknesses and problems exist in the current social and public services for the unemployed.

Appendix B

Visited Organizations

** The Seoul Center for the Unemployed*

This agency was founded in 1998 and is funded by the government and nationwide donations in 1998 to help the unemployed who lost jobs due to the economic crisis in South Korea. The Federation of Democratic Labor Unions, the largest coalition of labor union in the country, began to create the center for the unemployed in each province. The Seoul Center is the main office mainly working on developing and assessing programs for the unemployed, as well as operating a variety of sub associations for the unemployed under its organization. I met the director of the Seoul center and asked him to introduce me to unemployed men who are associated with one of their groups. He connected me to five unemployed men who have received welfare benefits and public work opportunities through the agency. I interviewed these people for 3-4 hours in the office when they finished their daily work. They make livings through public work provided under the part of welfare law, which was newly enacted after the economic crisis of 1998 when the unemployment rate was the highest in recent Korean History. At that time, various groups of people, including professionals, white-collar workers, and former government officials, had received the benefits. These benefits include a cash benefit of US\$90 and/or 8 hours of public work per day, which also includes street and park clean ups. The average daily income does not exceed US\$20 with an average of 20 working days per month, excluding raining days, weekends, and holidays. The recipients are allowed to work only for three months, and after at least a month, they can reapply for the work.

*** *Federation for Residents in Kwanwak-Ku***

This organization was founded to help people in the poor area of Seoul City getting jobs, running free daycare centers, and connecting the poor people to a variety of community resources. Its main activities have changed from a poverty-based movement to an unemployment-based movement after the economic crisis. The poverty movement is based on organizing the poor people toward political actions while the unemployment movement emphasizes job connections and creations by reforming the current welfare law. I interviewed a women worker in the organization who has devoted her life to helping those people for more than 10 years. She reported that after the economic crisis numerous people in the area experienced job loss, family disruption, and severe economic deprivation. Most men in the area had worked as construction workers and women as janitors and maids, but now it is hard for them to find those jobs. Most women in the region work to supplement family income because their husbands have very unstable jobs and are frequently unemployed. One of salient features among men in the area is to depend too much on drinking alcohol. After the economic crisis, their economic situation was getting worse due to limited job availability with the worsening economy in South Korea. Some of husbands left homes and lost psychological abilities to work. Wives lived without their husbands' income and sought help from the organization, which has very limited resources to provide benefits for them. Workers in the organization raised funds to run free meal programs and to extend its daycare centers. They also opened some businesses, such as care providers for the sick and recycling trash for profit. Despite their very effort to make profits, they failed in most of their businesses due to limited business mind and skills. I asked her to introduce me to some local residents who lost jobs during the economic crisis and got her promise to arrange interviews for my summer fieldwork.

*** *Organization for Unemployment Movement***

This organization was founded for poverty movement in the Northern part of Seoul city. Workers in the organization have long been devoted to helping the poor in the area and have very strong relationships with local people, churches, priests, medical doctors, and other charity organizations. They thought that their organizational goals should be changed to the unemployment movement from their previous emphasis on the poverty movement. The unemployment movement was so new to them before the economic crisis, which brought about so many unemployed people and desperate family disruptions. One of concerns of the organization is to create a strong federation with the unemployed and to open new business with them. The unemployed associated with the organization found jobs through it and collected small amounts of money, which will be invested for collective businesses. I met the director of the organization and asked about the unemployed who sought help from it. He responded that we should not be too optimistic about the unemployment movement because people in the region are often helpless and hopeless to escape from their miserable situation. Mainly these tendencies are originated from inappropriate and irrational welfare policies of the Korean government that are based on the IMF structural adjustment program. These policies intend to invest more funds on corporations and reduce welfare benefits. He saw the government policies as their most threatening obstacles to making progress on their programs. The organization has held various protests and demonstrations with other similar organizations.

*** *House of Freedom***

This agency is one of the largest homeless shelters with 1,000 homeless people living in the facility. It is located in the center of Seoul city and was founded in 1998 for the need to help the increasing number of homeless people in Seoul. Seoul city has 106 homeless shelters and this shelter is the largest one. No

women and families are in the shelter, and only ten staff and a few workers in the kitchen work for the organization. This government-funded organization was built in the old school site and provides rooms and food for the homeless residents. Many homeless people are not willing to go to shelters because they do not like to comply with a variety of regulations imposed by the shelters, such as curfews, no alcohol drinking, regular eating and bedtimes, and participation in their programs. I conducted interviews with two homeless residents and found from the interviews that the characteristics of the people in the shelter were as follows; 1) persons who were former business owners, bankrupt and unable to pay back debts, 2) persons who had regular jobs, were fired by the closeout or downsizing of their companies, and were unable to find other jobs, and 3) persons who are from poor families and did not have formal education, and/or jobs. One of homeless people I interviewed attempted suicide in the park and came to the shelter after his recovery in the hospital. I will conduct more interviews in the shelter in the summer.

*** *Federation of Democratic Trade Unions***

This organization is one of two nation-wide labor union associations and much more radical than the other coalition. This organization has a sub-unit for the unemployed. The organization began focusing on unemployment when a number of workers in member unions were suffering coerced layoffs caused by the structural adjustment programs. Some of workers could not receive previous income and retirement benefits. Mainly this organization raised funds for helping the unemployed, and now actively supports local agencies in developing programs and maintaining organizations. Currently workers who lost jobs from Samsung Life Insurance and Daewoo Motors are working together to try to get rehired.

****Dong-A Engineering Co.***

This company was closed due to the structural adjustment programs by which the government required each big business group to select sub companies to shut down. Dong-A group, the tenth largest business group in South Korea, chose to close this firm and fired 200 engineers and other workers. The workers who lost jobs had not been paid for six months and did not receive retirement benefits. Since workers in the company were college graduates or higher, they thought that the company was their life-long devoted working place. Most Korean firms have introduced a tenure system, thus requiring their employees to keep loyalty to their firms. Those workers in Dong-A Engineering Co. protested against the company's irresponsibility in not paying overdue payments and benefits by living and sleeping in tents in front of the group building for 120 days. Consequently, they got 70% of their payments back and are still working on this struggle. I interviewed five of these people in their union office and learned what a different impact unemployment has had on both the lower and middle upper classes.

****Private Organization for providing free meals to the homeless***

This organization is run by a medical doctor who provides free meals for the homeless in Wonju City, located about 40 minutes away from Seoul. Doctor Lee operates a local clinic with his wife, an MD, and started to offer free meals in 1999. He also provides free medical treatment and medicines. Currently about 30 people are served everyday and 10 homeless people live in his shelter. On weekends, he also leads a program for quitting alcohol. He pointed out that one of the major problems among the homeless is excessive alcohol consumption, which causes various diseases including mental problems and lack of motivation for getting jobs. With his help, I met two respondents who lost jobs due to the bankruptcy of their companies and are now eagerly looking for jobs.

The Seoul Center for the Unemployed, a headquarter of center for unemployed, was founded in 1998 by the cooperative efforts of Federation of Democratic Labor Unions and a variety of civil organizations to overcome the increasing unemployment problems caused by the economic crisis in South Korea. This organization develops and designs programs such as job creation and job connection and holds regular meetings and rallies with staff members and the unemployed. House of Freedom, the largest homeless shelter with approximately 1,000 homeless people, was founded in 1998 to deal with the homelessness problems resulted from the economic crisis for the first time in Korean history. The Dong-A Engineering Co. was a subsidiary of the tenth largest conglomerate in South Korea and closed in 1998 with the structural adjustment programs of the government and the International Monetary Fund. This company laid off its all employees without paying overdue payments and retirement benefits. Thus, the labor union of the engineering company has struggled to get the payment for three years and two-thirds of the payments have been given to the former employees. The last organization, which helped the researcher contact with the unemployed was the privately funded organization for providing free meals to local homeless people and elderly. The data discussed in this study included interviews with staff in the organizations, various documentary sources, such as newsletters from the various civil organizations.

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